



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
February 12 – 19, 2016

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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Qanurli, Nunavut's Inuktitut TV show, travels to other Inuit regions

'I think a comedy-drama genre really represents the Inuit culture very well' says lead actor

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 20, 2016 6:00 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 20, 2016 10:22 AM CT



'It's very important for us to have Inuktitut as the main language in our TV series,' said Thomas Anguti Johnston, left, who plays a character called Inuk Qablunaaq on *Qanurli*. (*Qanurli*)

The cast and crew of *Qanurli*, Nunavut's Inuktitut language TV show, can turn anything into a joke, but when they speak about why an Inuktitut series is needed, they're all business.

"It's very important for us to have Inuktitut as the main language in our TV series as well as introduce a new style of television that we haven't had much of in the Arctic or from Inuit in the Arctic," said Thomas Anguti Johnston, who plays a character called Inuk Qablunaaq on *Qanurli*.

The show, which bills itself as "Wayne's World meets Saturday Night Live in the North," is shooting outside of Nunavut for the first time in its five seasons. The crew has taken the show on the road, shooting episodes in Rankin Inlet, Arviat, Igloolik, and Cambridge Bay and now the cast is in Kuujuaq, Que.

"A big goal for us this season ... is to kind of branch out a bit and make it not so much a Nunavut show but an Inuit show," said Stacey Aglok MacDonald, producer.



Qanurli bills itself as 'Wayne's World meets Saturday Night Live in the North,' and features comedic skits, commercial parodies, and fake newscasts that reflect social and political issues. (Qanurli)

An 'Inuit take' on comedy

Qanurli features comedic skits, commercial parodies and fake newscasts reflecting social and political issues. The show is led by two goofy Inuk guys who live in a tent and produce an Inuktitut language series.

Johnston says there are a lot of documentary-style films and TV shows about Inuit, but few comedies.

"We wanted to try something completely out of that realm," he said. "I think a comedy-drama genre really represents the Inuit culture very well. We have very funny people who love to laugh and love to joke around."

Johnston says the show highlights Inuit culture by poking fun at itself.

"What we've been working very hard towards is to modernize a lot of our jokes, but also at the same time keep it very Inuk."



'I think a comedy-drama genre really represents the Inuit culture very well, we have very funny people who love to laugh and love to joke around,' said Thomas Anguti Johnston, who plays the role of Inuk Qablunaaq on *Qanurli*. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

The show gives an Inuit spin to popular product advertisements. While CBC was on set, they were filming a segment featuring the Jerry Cans' Nancy Mike as "Lady Gaga" in a mock commercial for a perfume smelling like raw meat.

Through a comedic lense, the show also tackles many complex social and political issues in the North. Johnston said using humour allows the show to reach more people.

"With our comedic spin it makes it easy for us to be honest."

A recurring issue featured on the show is the controversy around mining rights on Inuit land. The two lead characters are often approached by southern companies who want to mine their land. At times the men negotiate with the companies, but sometimes the talks break down.

Johnston said the characters are a nod to his heroes.

"It's sort of our sort of shout out to back in the '70s when our Inuit leaders started really organizing to bring about land claims."

Not lost in translation

Producing a show in Inuktitut for Inuit across a large area is not an easy task, particularly because each region uses a different dialect.



When Vinnie Karetak, who plays Nipangi Huittuq, first started working on the show, he had a hard time understanding Johnston because they are from different regions of Nunavut. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

When Vinnie Karetak first started working on the show, he had a hard time understanding Johnston. Karetak, who plays Nipangi Huittuq, the co-lead, is originally from Arviat, while Johnston is from Igloolik. They speak different versions of Inuktitut.

"Over the years we've been able to start to understand each other and work great together," said Karetak.

The scripts for the show are written in English and then translated into various Inuktitut dialects by the actors who play the roles. Sometimes they get translation help from family.

"It's definitely a challenge but we've always been able to do it," said Aglok MacDonald, lead producer of *Qanurli*.

Despite the various dialects spoken on the show, *Qanurli*'s audience seems to be able to follow along, with the the help of English subtitles.

"Language doesn't really stop the show from being understandable to a larger audience," said Aglok MacDonald.

In the past *Qanurli* had a \$10,000 to \$20,00 budget per episode. Now thanks to funding from an APTN broadcast license, the Canadian Media Fund and Nunavut Film, the show has a budget of \$60,000 per episode.



'I think with a bigger budget it just expands our minds, and gives us a chance to say, we should do this we should do that, I think it's pretty awesome,' said Josh Qaumariaq one of the producers of the show. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/qanurli-nunavut-s-inuktitut-tv-show-travels-to-other-inuit-regions-1.3455962>

TANYA TAGAQ: CONTEMPORARY TRANCE

Siver | February 19, 2016 | Art |



2014 Polaris Prize, the Inuit Tanya Tagaq returned to Quebec with his musicians to create the live soundtrack for *Nanook of the North*, silent film directed by Robert Joseph Flaherty back nearly a century, is in 1922.

TANYA TAGAQ

This classic documentary film will be set to music by Tagaq and his faithful collaborators Jesse Zubot (violin, electronics) and John Martin (drums, electronics), which joins the guest Montreal Bernard Falaise (guitar). These Canadian musicians improvise with the native singer from Nunavut, gaming specialist throat, moreover a formidable performer.

“What we create live becomes the contemporary commentary of an Inuit artist on the film, which was the first open window of Arctic indigenous peoples in the world,” says Tanya Tagaq, added to his home in Victoria, British Columbia.

For reasons of intellectual property, she said, no record of these concerts was performed.

“For the stage, she says, we have the consent of rights holders, but we did not agree to a record. I’m not sure they would appreciate some sequences. What I do at times can be very critical! ”

contemporary trance

Beyond its sound quest, which fascinates with Tanya Tagaq is his ability to tap into the depths of his unconscious by reaching a daze. What is this state anyway? In a context where amalgamate free improvisation, noise art, naive melody or groove in a game hybrid instrumentation (acoustic, electric, electronics), suggest the term “contemporary trance.”

Tanya Tagaq is careful not to intellectualize it nevertheless recognizes the phenomenon:

“Indeed, it may be that I sometimes in another state if the performance off – this does not happen consistently – I will not remember certain moments experienced live. I am open to this state of abandonment ... I actually love me back! ”

“Trance? Self Hypnosis? Quite possible, but I can not name this condition accurately. ”

“Anyway, I’ve always been fascinated by the idea of achieving higher areas when my body is fully mobilized, period after which I feel I have cleaned something in me says the ‘artist. I do not know the history of trance among Inuit, but I believe in the presence of my ancestors in me. I’ve always felt. It can also be interpreted as a manifestation of the genetic memory -. Which explains my ease with the game throat, for example ”

Beyond this artistic singularity, the public character of Tanya Tagaq has gained in stature and influence since winning the Polaris Prize for best Canadian album in 2014.

“I would say that my artistic load has changed, she says. Recently we have recorded new material, and it is much heavier! Nearly 60 artists were involved, including one huge chorus. Sometimes we approach the hardcore, but I also show me more vulnerable than ever in the sweetest sequences recording. This new album will be released at the end of the summer. ”

Porter culture itself

Ambassador of the new Aboriginal culture, Tanya Tagaq does not consider itself as a militant of First Nations, but it assumes full public accountability.

“Artists, she poses, all talk of their lives on earth. I am very aware of who I am and why I do what I do. When I led university in Halifax, I quickly realized the disparity of the human condition among the people of the South and the North. I understood the concept of colonialism. And I have artistically expressed what I wore in my lifetime. ”

What she wore exactly? The great wealth of its cultural heritage ... and the stigma of colonial oppression.

“I have been repeatedly treated like a second class citizen. Examples? During a concert in Ottawa, they warned me not to drink too much before going on stage, as if I was necessarily alcoholic because aboriginal person! I have been pursued by a redneck who clearly wanted to attack me. While I was with my daughter in a shop, a salesman began to follow us with suspicion, as if we were going to commit a robbery. Even today, I have to live with these stereotypes that places side by side with the locals. ”

Tanya Tagaq continues to rise against these stereotypes. We know that among others denounced the documentary Of the North filmmaker Dominic Gagnon, it “racist” and considers that “stigmatizes and discredits our culture,” in the words collected last fall by our colleague Jean Siag .

She adds: “This film feeds these lamentable stereotypes of Northerners, without putting them in context, without entering the problem without human. It made me angry because I have to live with this representation of my people. The filmmaker, no. ”

Anyway, Tanya Tagaq watch is optimistic about the public awakening Aboriginal Conditions.

“Today, I have the feeling of being less this exotic thing, and to be recognized as a contemporary artist. After all, I worked with international artists of the highest level, such Björk, Matthew Barney and the Kronos Quartet. I am part of changing mentalities. And I

frequent wonderful human beings of all practices, races, nationalities, languages, colors, religions. It gives me much joy and energy, this also makes me avoid to focus on the negative part of my existence, while remaining aware of the necessary changes to it. ”

At the Cinquième Salle of Place des Arts tomorrow and Saturday, 20 pm (sold out). At the Palais Montcalm in Quebec City tonight, 20 pm.

Direct Link: <http://sivertimes.com/tanya-tagag-contemporary-trance/10448>

Nanook of the North, As You've Never Seen (Or Heard) It Before



by Mark Lindenberg , February 19, 2016

LifeinQuebec.com reviewer Mark Lindenberg went along to the Tanya Tagaq concert at the Palais Montcalm in Quebec City.

This is how he saw it:

As usual, I'm behind the culture curve. I had, of course, heard of Tanya Tagaq by the time of her 2014 Polaris Music Prize win, for the *Animism* album. I had heard traditional throat-singing, performed by two women, and that Tagaq had adapted it for solo performance.

But I hadn't heard Tagaq sing. Nor had I ever seen *Nanook of the North*, Robert Flaherty's 1922 docu-drama about Inuit life.

Probably a good thing on both counts, in this case. Tagaq's performance on February 18, at Québec City's Palais Montcalm, didn't lend itself to pre-conceptions. She and her fellow musicians, a violinist, drummer, and guitarist, gave what's been called "the first documentary" an entirely new soundtrack.

Flaherty's work is a difficult piece: it includes aspects of truth and reality, an outsider's misinterpretation and embellishment, as well as the usual distortions typical of film – all combining to make an engaging, but inaccurate, portrait.

Before she begins, Tagaq speaks to us quietly, with humour and honesty, asking us not to take pictures, partly because she is dressed in a black cat-suit (for this performance only or for a series, she doesn't say). Researchers at Laval want to discover whether there is a correlation between the sounds she makes and her movements, on-stage. The other reason no recording is allowed? She asks us to experience her performance, rather than record it.

So we are in that moment, together. Her experience of it becomes ours, as much as possible.

By making her own soundtrack, juxtaposing her art and emotion with Flaherty's film, Tagaq and her stage companions take the unreal (Nanook biting into a gramophone record, a naive savage), fuse it with feeling – keening wail, throaty growl, murmuring whisper, pound of the drum, thrum of the guitar, lament of the violin. She gives it to the audience in what she wittily calls “a modern human” context.

Watching her on-stage gyrations, hearing the sounds of her voice, and combining those with Flaherty's images and text in my head, I see Tagaq take the stereotypes (the happy Eskimo), the staged elements (the hunt) and the real (the biting cold), and manipulate the white man's manipulation of her culture. She takes it back for herself, and gives us something more complete than Flaherty's “frozen wastes” and “happy-go-lucky Eskimo.”

What sticks with me, the morning after? Tagaq's empathy for animals: the howls of fear she gave the hunted, their rage at being caught, their desire to escape. The guttural snarl of two sled dogs fighting. The quiet moments, too: Nanook and his family bedding down for the night, or getting up in the morning, children clambering all over the place, things that all of us can relate to. An aurally odd moment that suddenly seems perfectly natural: An igloo being built to the sounds of stress, strain and pain. Could it have been done without?

And the ending? Too good for spoilers. Result: I can't imagine what this film was, without Tagaq's own soundtrack.

Nor would I want to.

Direct Link: <http://www.lifeinquebec.com/nanook-of-the-north-as-youve-never-seen-or-heard-it-before-11598/>

Indigenous artists gather in Regina during Aboriginal Storytelling Month

KERRY BENJOE

Published on: February 21, 2016 | Last Updated: February 21, 2016 1:37 PM CST



Walking with our Sisters exhibit at the First Nations University of Canada in Regina November 2013.

February is Aboriginal Storytelling Month and once again the Sakewewak First Nation Artist Collective has a week of activities planned.

The organization turns 20 this year and is hosting the 16th annual Sakewewak Storytelling Festival.

Adam Martin, executive director of Sakewewak, said it's a milestone year and he's proud to be part of it.

"The festival is a multi-disciplinary indigenous arts celebration," he said. "It is a space that is made so that indigenous artists can focus on their discipline and develop work in a space that is accepting, comfortable and can be shared with, and critiqued with, our community and our extended community."

Martin said the need obviously still exists because if it did not, then the organization and festival would have ceased long ago.

This year's festival will focus on the talents of local artists and emerging artists as they need opportunities to grow.

Some art exhibits will run throughout the month but the kickoff to the main event is taking place on Feb. 23.

In partnership with the Dunlop Gallery, Peter Morin will attempt to create the world's largest gluten-free bannock.

Organizers are also partnering with the Plain Red Art Gallery at the First Nations University of Canada to present Indigenous Artists' Symposium: Activism and Education Through the Arts.

The keynote for the symposium is Metis artist Christi Belcourt who is speaking at FNUniv on Feb. 25.

"Her grassroots efforts, I think, have really made her an excellent choice," said Martin.

Walking with Our Sisters, a commemorative art exhibit by Belcourt, debuted in 2013 in Edmonton and later was at the FNUniv.

It features nearly 2,000 vamps, which are part of a moccasin. The vamps were amassed primarily through donation and was created to raise awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women in Canada.

Belcourt also partnered with Valentino creative designers to help transform some of her Metis artwork on to the runway as part of Valentino's resort collection.

Martin said what impressed him about that move was that she researched the designer before agreeing to the partnership.

"It really speaks to her integrity," he said.

Martin said the symposium will be held over two days, which he hopes will help local artists join the discussion about art and its influences locally, nationally and internationally.

"As indigneous artists we convey a certain viewpoint that can help others understand what is going on in our communities and the historical perspective," he said.

Martin said the festival will also include film screenings, workshops and entertainment.

On Feb. 26, the event will wrap up with the Indigenous Poets Society that will feature Brad Bellegarde, Linday Knight and Kevin Wesaquate.

All events are open to the public and free of charge. A full schedule lineup is available on the Sakewewak 2016 Storytellers Festival and Indigenous Arts Symposium.

Direct Link: <http://leaderpost.com/news/local-news/indigneous-artists-gather-in-regina-during-aboriginal-storytelling-month>

Indigenous fashion designers outraged 'DSquaw' designers awarded Team Canada contract

National News | February 19, 2016 by Shaneen Robinson

Shaneen Robinson

APTN National News

Indigenous fashion designers are expressing their outrage after a fashion company that came under fire last year over a racially-charged clothing line has been awarded a big design contract.

D-Squared2 initially dubbed their fall/winter line “DSquaw” and now have been awarded a contract by the Hudson’s Bay Company to create athletic wear for Team Canada for upcoming 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio.

The Milan-based label was founded in 1995 by the Caten brothers, who were inducted into Canada’s Walk of Fame in 2009.

The award-winning duo has past experience designing sportswear, having been enlisted by Italian soccer giant Juventus to create their official team uniforms.

The Catens were headline talent costume designers for the opening and closing ceremonies at the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver and took part in the torch relay.

Dsquared2 has also outfitted its share of A-list stars, most recently Beyonce, who wore a custom creation by the label during her buzzed-about Super Bowl halftime performance.

The Dsquared2-designed opening ceremony outfit and the full Team Canada collection is slated to be unveiled in April.

-With files from The Canadian Press

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/19/indigenous-fashion-designers-outraged-dsquaw-designers-awarded-team-canada-contract/>

Seal of approval: Inuit celebrate culture in capital

BY BRUCE DEACHMAN

FIRST POSTED: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2016 08:31 PM EST |

UPDATED: MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2016 11:06 AM EST

A sizeable portion of Ottawa's Inuit community — and others — ignored Saturday's rain to take part in the Inuit Day celebrations, an outdoor party that featured throat-singing, traditional face-painting, games and a feast of ancestral victuals, including bannock, caribou stew, Arctic char and whale blubber.

At the centre of it all, a seal that was, until very recently, basking on the ice and in the waters around Qikiqtarjuaq — formerly Broughton Island — in Nunavut, gave its bloody all for the alfresco banquet.

About 300 people attended the event at the Ottawa Inuit Children's Centre on McArthur Road in Vanier, which has been hosting the annual self-proclaimed festival on a Saturday in February for almost 15 years.

"It's a day to celebrate being Inuit in Ottawa," said organizer Heidi Langille. "We wanted to celebrate all things Inuit culture, outdoors and in the wintertime."

It's up for debate as to whether Ottawa or Winnipeg has the largest population of Inuit outside the North, but Langille estimates that the capital boasts roughly 3,000. "It's a chance to make connections or reconnect and celebrate who we are, and have lots of fun," she said.

An elders tent featured a Coleman stove, a qulliq — a traditional oil lamp — and cups of tea, an olfactory combination that brought one woman to nostalgic tears. Elsewhere, children played on snowbanks, old friends hugged and talked, and everyone ate.

For Samantha Kigutaq-Metcalf, 12, and Cailyn Degrandepre, 11, much of Saturday's fun revolved around the throat-singing, a game in which participants face off in pairs — one a leader, the other following — with the winner being the one who doesn't laugh first (think of a staring contest with guttural, sometimes melodic, sounds). The two, who collectively go by the name Ministers of Cuteness, performed for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau at his swearing-in ceremony at Rideau Hall last November.

"I like this because you get Inuit food, you play Inuit games and do Inuit art," said Cailyn. "And the throat-singing."

Centre executive director Karen Baker-Anderson says that Inuit Day's importance lies in preserving and celebrating "the beauty and strength of the culture."

"People will come here and eat their food, and their souls get filled. And they walk away happy, feeling they've had a taste of the Arctic while being here in Ottawa."

Ina Zakal was one of the centre's co-founders and creator of its Inuit Day, which was originally held solely for its children but soon expanded to include the public. She had the honour Saturday of eating one of the seal's most-sought-after eyeballs.

Direct Link: <http://www.ottawasun.com/2016/02/20/seal-of-approval-inuit-celebrate-culture-in-capital>

Students' paddle-making prowess fêted by Festival



CTV Winnipeg

Published Saturday, February 20, 2016 4:19PM CST

Last Updated Saturday, February 20, 2016 6:58PM CST

First Nations and Métis students had their hard work recognized at Festival du Voyageur on Friday.

The students from Lockport School all took part in a program that put them in touch with history by hand-carving wooden canoe paddles, a process they documented by keeping a photo journal.

On Friday, their creations were displayed at the Silver Canoe Dinner for the Canadian Canoe Museum -- at Fort Gibraltar.



First Nations and Métis students from Lockport School made these paddles as part of a program teaching them wood working and photography.

CTV first introduced you to their class in January. Eight students -- aged 12 to 15 -- of First Nations and Métis heritage were selected for their desire to learn more about their culture.

"The artwork on some of them is awesome. On all of them, is awesome," said instructor Mark Blieske.

"The work that they put into actually making it, these kids worked hard. They were on task, they did the job there was no social media there...It was all about photography and making paddles."

The program is a joint effort by Tillikum Lens and Paddles Across Canada. The teens documented the process on a photo blog and will test their paddles on a canoe trip.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/students-paddle-making-prowess-f%C3%AAded-by-festival-1.2786278>

Trees and funny accents: Qanurli does Nunavik

"We've got a good fan base here"

SARAH ROGERS, February 22, 2016 - 8:30 am



Qanurli's main stars Nipangi Huittuq (Vinnie Karetak), left, and Inuk Qablunaaq (Anguti Johnston) are pictured here with their crew filming a scene outside Kuujjuaq's town hall Feb. 21. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

KUUJJUAQ — The creators of the Nunavut comedy show Qanurli won't say too much about what viewers can expect to see during its fifth season, except to say that there will be trees involved.

That's because the show's cast and crew was filming with Kuujjuaq's stumpy black spruce as the backdrop this past weekend, the first time Qanurli has based an episode outside the territory.

"We've wanted to come here for a long time, so this is exciting," said Vinnie Karetak, who plays Nipangi Huittuq, over Sunday brunch at the Kuujjuaq Inn.

"We've got a good fan base here in Nunavik," said Anguti Johnston, aka Inuk Qablunaaq, who has his own roots in Nunavik: he spent part of his childhood in the Hudson coast community of Inukjuak.

This episode the crew was filming follows Qanurli's main characters, Nipangi and Inuk, around Kuujjuaq while they scout local talent for a new Inuk television network that they hope to start.

Kuujuaq's Olivia Ikey Duncan, a local youth employment counsellor, provided on-site support, helping them find local actors and shooting locations around the community of 2,300.

"Do you want us to pretend to do a Nunavut accent?" Ikey Duncan asked.

"No, no," Johnston responded. "Do a thick Kuujuaq accent."

The diversity of Inuktitut dialects on set creates linguistic challenges for the show's producers — who hail from all three of Nunavut's regions — like trying to find a neutral word that Inuit viewers from across Nunavut will understand.

With a weekend in Nunavik, the crew added another regional dialect to the mix.

"How do we say 'bugs' in a way that everyone will understand?" Johnston asked, offering an example of a weekend dilemma. The crew settled on *qupiruk* in the end.

But that was not enough to set them back. Eventually, Qanurli creators would love to visit the "entire Inuit world," as Johnston puts in, from Alaska across to Greenland.

Qanurli can do that, now that it's stopped working with the Inuit Broadcasting Corp., which bound the show to Nunavut.

The show's producers have now started their own Iqaluit-based Qanukiaq Studios, which produces the show in association with the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network.

The show's creators can say season five will be bigger and better than anything they've produced in the past. That's largely thanks to new funding through the Canadian Media Fund and Nunavut Film Development Corp., which has tripled the show's budget.

"We're able to bring in a bigger crew — before we were limited to four or five people multi-tasking," Johnston said.

"Now we're able to bring in more professionals to teach us new skills. Sometimes our crew is 20 people."

"We went from being really terrible..." begins Karetak.

"We've grown," interjects Johnston, laughing. "We were all really new to television when we started, but we've learned a lot over these five seasons."

Qanurli season five rolls out on APTN in September 2016.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674trees_and_funny_accents_qanurli_do_es_nunavik/

Louis Riel comes to life as 2D puppet in new Montreal play

Bilingual play based on celebrated 2003 graphic novel by Chester Brown to be performed at Théâtre La Chapelle

By Jaime Little, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 25, 2016 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 25, 2016 6:00 AM ET



A popular graphic novel about the life of Métis leader Louis Riel has been reinvented as a form-bending 2D stage play by a Montreal indie theatre company.

The show, *Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Stage Play*, mixes black-and-white cut-outs with live acting and shadow imagery to tell the story of Riel's 19th-century rebellion.

"The simplicity of the comic-style images helps make the story accessible," said [RustWerk ReFinery](#)'s puppeteer, playwright and co-director Zach Fraser.



Fraser's play is based on the text and images of Chester Brown's acclaimed 2003 graphic novel, *Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*. (Drawn & Quarterly)

"It's a contradiction in a way, because the images are naive but still expressive," Fraser added.

"The comic strip is in black and white, the images are simple, the dialogue is simple. And I liked taking a complicated, controversial personality and revisiting the story in this way."

Fraser's play is based on the text and images of Chester Brown's acclaimed 2003 graphic novel, [*Louis Riel: A Comic-Strip Biography*](#). As in Brown's book, the play's dialogue moves from French to English depending on the context.

A new kind of staging

Initially, Fraser said the actors he worked with thought he was crazy to use two-dimensional puppets rather than three-dimensional ones as he has done in previous performances.

He adds that evoking full, multifaceted historical characters using naive drawings was a challenge he enjoyed.

"When you read any story, it's on the page — it's not three dimensional yet, it's not alive until we bring it to life," he said.

"With any puppet, any object, we invest something in it to give it life. It was more difficult in 2D than 3D, but I hope the audience will forget that it's 2D and just get into the story."

Louis Riel: A Comic Strip Stage Play from Feb. 25 to March 5 at Montreal's [*La Chapelle Theatre*](#) (3700 rue Saint-Dominique). Tickets \$25.50-\$37.50.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/louis-riel-theatre-metis-1.3462161>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Inuit regional government in northern Labrador fires finance minister



The Canadian Press
Published Thursday, February 18, 2016 4:03PM EST

For the second time in a year, a minister in the Inuit regional government that oversees a swath of northern Labrador has been fired.

Nunatsiavut President Sarah Leo said in a statement Finance Minister Danny Pottle lost her confidence after missing two key meetings.

The Nunatsiavut Executive Council oversees health, education and other matters in its territory.

"As Treasurer of Nunatsiavut, Mr. Pottle was required to attend an important meeting in Nain this week to present the government's annual financial plan to the Nunatsiavut Executive Council, but he decided not to attend in person," said Leo. "As well, he was expected to join the other members of the Nunatsiavut Executive Council at an open house in the community.

"Mr. Pottle had no valid reason for his absence and, therefore, lost the confidence of the president and the first minister."

Pottle, who was also removed Thursday as minister of human resources and information technology, continues as an ordinary member of the Nunatsiavut Assembly representing the constituency of Canada.

In a news release quoted by CBC, Pottle blamed his absences on exhaustion and weather, and said he was dismayed and distraught at being removed.

Leo said Lands and Natural Resources Minister Darryl Shiwak will take over Pottle's portfolios on an interim basis.

Last April, Leo removed Richard Pamak as the council's minister of culture, recreation and tourism after questions were raised about some of his expense filings.

Leo wouldn't reveal the amount of money in dispute, but Pamak said at the time all of his travel expenses were approved by the assembly's first minister and any discrepancies in his claims were resolved.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/inuit-regional-government-in-northern-labrador-fires-finance-minister-1.2783676>

Westbank First Nation Chief shares development plans

By [Angela Jung](#) South Okanagan reporter Global News



February 24, 2016 5:53 pm

Updated: February 24, 2016 6:58 pm

WEST KELOWNA — With over 400 businesses on Westbank First Nations (WFN) land, Chief Robert Louie says his band is open for business.

“We are the largest first nations community with the developments on a reserve in Canada,” he said Wednesday in front of a crowd of about 50 people at a Greater Westside Board of Trade luncheon.

This entrepreneurial drive hasn’t gone unnoticed in West Kelowna’s business community, which is one of the reasons Louie was invited to speak.

“We’ve partnered with Westbank First Nation over the past several years. We want to continue our relationship and ensure we’re on the same page and moving together within our community,” says Chair Christopher Cruz.

One item of interest at the meeting was the major private hospital project that hasn’t gone

The band proposed to build Canada’s first for-profit, private hospital to take advantage of medical tourism. However, its fundraising partner failed to come through with the money needed for the \$125 million clinic.

“In our minds that end of the bargain wasn’t fulfilled. We’ve got to do one of two things: get a new partner or evaluate the whole medical centre proposal,” explains Louie.

While that project is stalled, the band says other developments are on the way. It has acquired more than [700 acres of land in an exchange](#) with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure as part of this highway interchange project.

“As far as development of all these properties, that’s going to take some time, some consultation with our membership and we need to create land use plans.”

The Chief’s message today: there will be many more business opportunities on the Westbank reserve in the years ahead.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2538963/westbank-first-nation-chief-shares-development-plans/>

Aboriginal Community Development

First Nations fighting 'uphill battle' to hold on to culture



Edler Samtica (left) and Gus Timoyakin spend a moment during a break in the action at the seventh annual Okanagan Band School Conference at Outma Sqilx'w Cultural School on the Penticton Indian Reserve Thursday.

by [Mark Brett - Penticton Western News](#)

posted Feb 18, 2016 at 4:00 PM

For Jeannette Armstrong, the cultural struggles for First Nations people is far from over.

She made the comments during her keynote address on the first day of the Okanagan Band School Conference at Outma Sqilx'w Cultural School on the Penticton Indian Reserve.

"This work is always for tomorrow, it's never going to get resolved it's never going to be perfect, we're always going to be fighting an uphill battle to find tools, to find programs, to find new ways," she told a crowd of several hundred Thursday. "We're against the rising tide of change all the time. We have got to work and we've got to understand that and we have to respond to that.

"We always have to understand that there's never going to be enough money, there's never going to be enough people, never going to be enough time."

The two-day conference, Language is Our Breath, includes a number of workshops and presentations for Okanagan bands throughout the valley and Washington State with the focus on First Nations studies.

Armstrong is director of the En'owkin Centre, she has won numerous awards for her work, has a bachelor of fine arts degree from the University of Victoria and an honorary doctorate of letters from St. Thomas University.

She is an author, artist, educator and activist and is well-known for her cultural commitment to the First Nations people.

“Our language was devil worshiping, this is what our elders had to contend with, that’s what our elders had to stand up against,” she said. “It was a real struggle for a lot of them and today we’re faced with many of the same things the same prejudices and the challenges of drugs, the challenges of alcohol.

“There’s only one way of truth and so when you think about that you look at some of the means of stopping us and blocking us there’s still a lot of things we have to clean up with little brother for their understanding to happen and we’re doing that with these types of gatherings and conferences.”

She pointed out knowledge can be imparted in any language.

“French has a higher priority, English has a higher priority in the budgeting process,” said Armstrong. “We have to push for our languages to be official languages. Our leaders have to push for that, to fight for that or that reconciliation will never happen.”

During her talk she acknowledged the many people who have fought to keep their speech alive through the years and who are continuing to do so for future generations.

Gus Timoyakin of Vernon, who is Armstrong’s nephew agreed with the need to preserve the language.

“The importance here is to collaborate other teachers and peers about the value of knowledge to help one another,” said Timoyakin, who also teaches aboriginal language. “It’s the voice of literature it’s the voice of prayers voice of guidance and it’s the custom to continue to do what we have been doing.

“The importance is for the children, the grandchildren.”

Several programs are either planned or already underway to promote First Nations language on the reserve.

Outma School is planning to implement an immersion-style class for the younger children, hopefully by next year.

Already in operation is the Syilx Language House where 15 adults recently completed 200 hours of Nsyilxcn instruction through the completion the second curriculum textbook.

Direct Link: <http://www.pentictonwesternnews.com/news/369356461.html>

Editorial: Indigenous communities in Quebec need immediate help

MONTREAL GAZETTE EDITORIAL BOARD

Published on: February 19, 2016 | Last Updated: February 19, 2016 6:11 PM EST



Recent suicides in Nunavik should serve as a call to action.

Three teenagers take their own lives in an eight-week period. A young police officer is shot dead responding to a domestic call, then the shooter turns the gun on himself. A report by Quebec's ombudsman describes horrific prison conditions, sometimes with seven or more detainees in cells intended for two, limited access to water, and no beds.

The news coming out of indigenous communities in Quebec in recent days has been devastating. Immediate action is required.

Of course, there is no quick fix. Any effort to bring about meaningful change in remote communities plagued by violence, suicide and substance abuse requires a deep examination of underlying causes, like rampant poverty, housing shortages and the legacy of residential schools. Public Security Minister Martin Coiteux is right to say the province must work with its indigenous peoples to find long-term solutions.

However, it's necessary to respond with urgency when possible. For example, while Quebec coroner's office is set to launch a public inquest into a rash of suicides last year in two Innu reserves near Sept-Îles, residents of Kuujuaq aren't waiting to take action. Some have completed a locally sponsored program to help identify people at risk of harming themselves. That community, in Nunavik, has been rocked by three suicides in recent weeks, including that of Lukasi Forrest, 19, who starred in the 2014 award-nominated film *Uvanga*.

And yet, access to such programs and resources are said to be lacking in the communities that need them most. In her report Thursday, Quebec ombudsman Raymonde Saint-Germain noted "resources dedicated to treating alcoholism and substance abuse in Nunavik are scanty. Furthermore, Inuit offenders have limited access to social reintegration support services." These services, she says, "are essential in curbing the increase in complex social problems."

Saint-Germain's report focuses on the appalling treatment of Inuit people in the provincial justice system. Here, too, some immediate steps can be taken to alleviate

problems she equates to Third World conditions. For example, prisoners in some villages are confined to their cells 24 hours a day — “a unique situation in Quebec that is in violation of minimum standards.” There should be no delay in carrying out her recommendation of providing a secure space for detainees to spend time outdoors.

On Friday, the Gazette reported on another set of problems, this time facing aboriginal police departments. Key among them is a pay scale that makes it difficult to retain officers with experience working on reserves. This, too, needs urgent attention. Thierry Leroux, 26, had been on the job six months when he was fatally shot in Lac-Simon on a domestic call.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/opinion/editorials/editorial-indigenous-communities-in-quebec-need-immediate-help>

Metis educator and researcher Jo-Ann Episkenew passes away at age 63

Uncategorized | February 20, 2016 by APTN National News |



(Jo-Ann Episkenew. Photo courtesy University of Regina)

April Johnson

APTN National News

Educator and researcher Jo-Ann Episkenew died at the age of 63 on Wednesday.

According to friends, Episkenew held a strong voice in the community as the director of the Indigenous Peoples Health Research Centre at the University of Regina.

Her lifelong dedication to healthy communities was showcased nationwide at this year's Indspire awards held February 12 in Vancouver, where she won the award for education.

In her biography, she said her children inspired her to work hard to improve not only her life, but the lives of her entire family.

Episkenew obtained a Bachelor and Masters degree from the University of Saskatchewan. In 2006 she graduated from the University of Greifswald. She was the first Indigenous Canadian to receive a PhD from a German university.

According to colleague Cassandra Wajuntah, Episkenew has inspired the next generation of indigenous scholars.

“She is single-handedly responsible for producing dozens of Indigenous faculty members and graduate students,” said Wajuntah. “She has supported me all the way through my undergrad to my PhD, from being an 18-year-old to a 29-year-old mother. We have faculty members on campus who specifically stay here because of the support Jo-Ann offers them.”

In addition to this year’s Indspire award, Episkenew also won the 2015 YWCA Women of Distinction Lifetime Achievement award. In her acceptance speech, her words reflected her love for her family and community.

“I thank all of you for recognizing me and the little bit I try to do to make my children proud and my grandchildren proud. And hopefully when I leave this world, it will be a better place than when I started.”

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/20/metis-educator-and-researcher-jo-ann-episkenew-passes-away-at-age-63/>

Indigenous welcome for refugees

[Tyler Clarke](#)

Published on February 19, 2016



Youth share a laugh during last summer’s multicultural powwow at the Prince Albert Indian and Métis Friendship Centre.

Series of multicultural events are serving to welcome Syrian refugees to Saskatchewan

Syrian refugees will know full-well Saskatchewan's indigenous, colonial and multicultural history and present-day.

Such is the goal behind a series of indigenous welcome events that have been set up across the province for next week, including a Monday, Feb. 22, event from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Prince Albert's St. Albans Cathedral Hall.

"The goal is to welcome newcomers in a way that is respectful of the indigenous culture and population," Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies representative Beulah Gana explained.

"As the newest group that is coming to the land, it is important to recognize that ... they were there long before."

Monday's event will be open to the public and will consist of a grand entry, welcome, a presentation about Treaty relationships, a cultural information exchange, round dance and a reception with light refreshments.

It's not only about highlighting Prince Albert's First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture, but also the area's increasingly multicultural community.

"We expect that some of the Syrian refugees will share their culture, so it will be like an exchange; not a one-way thing," Gana said.

The event is being organized by the Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and Moose Jaw partner agencies for Building Relationships through Intercultural Dialogue and Growing Engagement (BRIDGES), including the Saskatchewan Association of Immigration Settlement and Integration Agencies, Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan and the Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Saskatchewan.

It's part of BRIDGES' ongoing effort to bring communities together, culturally; an effort that includes the Prince Albert-based Common Ground pilot project.

Common Ground is hosting a "storytelling through word, music and dance" event on Saturday, Feb. 27, at the Prince Albert Multicultural Council from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Both the Monday, Feb. 22 indigenous welcome event and the Saturday, Feb. 27 storytelling event are open to the public, Gana said; "We will not turn anyone down."

Direct Link: <http://www.paherald.sk.ca/News/Local/2016-02-19/article-4441916/Indigenous-welcome-for-refugees/1>

First Nations youth walk to Thunder Bay to honour schoolmates who died

Student residence would help keep young people safe, DFC graduate says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 24, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 24, 2016 7:00 AM ET



The seven students who have died in Thunder Bay between 2000 and 2011 are, from top left, Jethro Anderson, 15, Curran Strang, 18, Paul Panacheese, 17, Robyn Harper, 18, Reggie Bushie, 15, Kyle Morriseau, 17, and Jordan Wabasse, 15. (CBC)

A small group of young people will set out on foot from Sachigo Lake First Nation in northern Ontario on Wednesday on a journey of about 800 kilometres to honour First Nations students who died and to attempt to keep others safe.

They expect to reach Thunder Bay after about two weeks of walking and plan to arrive in time to attend the inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations students who died between 2000 and 2011 while attending high school in the city.

It's the [third time a group has walked the winter road](#) from Ontario's remote north to Thunder Bay in hopes of raising enough money along the way to fund a First Nation student residence.

"I just want to see that more students go to school and know that they're going to finish," said Darlene Barkman, one of the walkers.

Barkman is a graduate of Dennis Franklin Cromarty First Nations High School in Thunder Bay. She said it was difficult moving to the city when she was 14-years-old and living in a boarding home.

"In the beginning it was okay, but then as we went on with the school year it just kind of got harder trying to keep up with taking the bus across town," she said of the hour-long trek on the city bus to early morning classes.

School officials hope to build a "student living centre" on property they own right beside the First Nations high school, but are struggling to secure funding.

An earlier plan to [develop a residence on the Confederation College campus](#) fell through.

"It would be nice to see an area [in the residence] where students could do more traditional stuff, like a craft area where they could learn about their traditional ways," Barkman said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-student-walk-1.3460681>

Ice roads, access for First Nations debated in House of Commons

NDP MP says mild weather has made ice roads, which bring supplies to northern First Nations, unsafe

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 24, 2016 10:21 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 25, 2016 6:23 AM CT



The mild winter and climate change are creating long term problems for northern First Nations, Member of Parliament Georgina Joilibois says.

The New Democratic Party MP for Desnethé-Missinippi-Churchill River spoke in the House of Commons Wednesday about the mild winter's impact on ice roads.

"Wollaston Lake, a northern Saskatchewan community of 1,800 people, is running out of fuel and food. Mild weather has made the ice road across Wollaston Lake unsafe, so there is no way to get supplies," Joilibois said.

"The chief and council of Hatchet Lake First Nation warn they may have to close their school and health centre thanks to the shortage."

She asked what the government will do to "help school children, sick people, elders, and the rest of the community get the supplies they so badly need"?

Churchill-Keewatinook Aski NDP MP Niki Ashton echoed those concerns.

"Northern Manitobans and people in northern Saskatchewan need action now from the federal government," she said.

"And thanks to an unusually mild winter, as a result of climate change, ice roads to all isolated communities in northern Manitoba opened late and some aren't even open at all. It is increasingly impossible for communities to get all the vital supplies they need like housing materials, food and fuel."



Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett says the Government of Canada recognizes the importance of winter roads to remote First Nations. (CBC)

Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett responded by saying the federal government recognizes the importance of winter roads to get supplies to remote communities.

"Because of climate change and because of this short season we are, we are really in trouble in terms of this kind of access that's no longer there," Bennett said.

She said that the government is monitoring the issue and will work with communities to find out how to get vital equipment in as soon as possible. Bennett added that a reliable network of ice roads is essential.

"We know we need long term solutions."

In the wake of the Paris Climate Summit and with this year's mild winter, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations renewed its calls for a northern grid road system in the province in January.

FSIN Chief Bobby Cameron said northern communities were at a greater risk due to climate change.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/ice-roads-access-for-first-nations-debated-in-house-of-commons-1.3463233>

Batchawana First Nation's Teala Nadjiwon appeals to UN for clean water help

United Nations committee reviewing Canada and Ontario records on human rights

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 25, 2016 3:43 PM ET Last Updated: Feb 25, 2016 3:43 PM ET



A Batchawana First Nation woman is appealing to the UN to improve access to safe water for her community. (CBC)

A woman from a First Nation near Sault Ste. Marie hopes that appearing before the United Nations [will lead to clean tap water](#) for her community.

Dozens of homes in Batchewana First Nation have been under a boil water advisory for decades, due to unsafe well water and high levels of uranium.

Teala Nadjiwon told her people's story to a UN committee in Geneva this week.

She said there's a misconception that poor drinking water only plagues remote First Nations — not those in the midst of cities like Batchewana.

"So, you would think that these urban-type communities wouldn't have these issues, but in fact they do, which again ties into the disparities and the inequities in federal fiduciary responsibilities," Nadjiwon told CBC News.

"So each community receives bottled water for their water needs and this had affected the community members in many different ways from their health and well-being to daily living, the simplest tasks that Canadians take for granted is simply not possible."

If the new Liberal government is serious about a new relationship with First Nations, then new infrastructure funding would be a good place to start, she noted.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/first-nations-water-batchawana-1.3464362>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Inuit inmates in northern Quebec subject to 'unacceptable' conditions: Report

A 2015 investigation found violations including unusable sanitary facilities, bad odours, soiled bedding, dirty cells and overpopulation.



Quebec's ombudsperson Raymonde Saint-Germain speaks at a news conference, Thursday, February 18, 2016 at the legislature in Quebec City.

By: Staff The Canadian Press Published on Thu Feb 18 2016

QUEBEC — The conditions faced by Inuit inmates in northern Quebec are similar to those in Third World prisons, the province's ombudswoman said Thursday after releasing a scathing report.

Unusable sanitary facilities, sickening odours, soiled bedding, filthy cells and overpopulation were among Raymonde Saint-Germain's findings on a tour last year of three villages in Nunavik, north of the 55th parallel.

Some prisoners have to eat their meals on the floor because they don't have a table or a chair. Others don't have access to a shower.

"It's not far off the Third World," Saint-Germain told a news conference after the report was tabled in the national assembly.

"I've had the opportunity to visit some prisons in Africa and my first reaction was to say, 'Well, it's no different from Africa.' This is very disturbing to realize that even in 2016 people in Nunavik do not receive the public services they deserve, that we don't adapt our correctional services and our justice system enough in order to serve them in the right way."

There are no penitentiaries in Nunavik and inmates are often held in police stations or in Amos, in northwestern Quebec.

Saint-Germain said Inuit prisoners are relegated to second-class status and she urged the government to act quickly to correct the inequalities.

"We know what the solutions are — they have to be put in place," she said.

Public Security Minister Martin Coiteux didn't indicate that any short-term plans are in the offing.

"The problem has deep roots," he told reporters, saying he was "concerned" about the situation.

Saint-Germain and members of her office visited Puvirnituk, Akulivik and Kuujuaq.

"Among the detainees who were interviewed, some said they hadn't had a shower for six days and that they didn't have any hygiene products to wash themselves," the report said.

Direct Link: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2016/02/18/report-finds-northern-quebec-prisons-housing-inuit-are-unsanitary-unacceptable.html>

Funding obstacles plague police officers in remote First Nations regions

CHRISTOPHER CURTIS, MONTREAL GAZETTE

Published on: February 20, 2016 | Last Updated: February 20, 2016 10:01 AM EST



A sign for the Opitciwan Police with bullet holes in 2013.

Frantic calls for backup that go unanswered, cops wearing worn out bulletproof vests and a pay scale that discourages officers from staying on the job.

These are some of the obstacles that plague officers serving in Quebec's remote aboriginal police departments, according to six veteran cops interviewed by the Montreal Gazette. Three of the officers did not want their names published for fear it might affect their future job prospects.

Calls for improved working conditions come just days after the shooting death of constable Thierry Leroux — a 26-year-old who was killed last Saturday while patrolling in the Lac Simon First Nation, south of Val-d'Or. Meanwhile, a report released Thursday by the province's ombudsman points to failed crime prevention strategies in the Nunavik region (home to the majority of Quebec's Inuit population).

The document tracks a 239-per-cent increase in cases before Nunavik's court system over the past decade. It links the spike in crime to a lack of accessible substance abuse treatment and other essential government services.

And while the workload for aboriginal police forces is only increasing, their resources can't keep up with the demand — according to senior police sources.



Opitciwan police sergeant Eric Cutnam in his office at the police station in the First Nation reserve of Opitciwan, 600 kilometres north of Montreal, on Saturday, Aug. 31, 2013. Opitciwan is an Atikamekw First Nations reserve with about 2,000 inhabitants.

Expired safety equipment

"We're supposed to replace our bulletproof vests every five years, without fail, but our department can't always afford that," said Sgt. Éric Cutnam, a 10-year veteran of the Opitciwan police department in the Haute-Mauricie region. "So you'll get a situation where maybe the vest has to last you six years, maybe it has to last you seven. We're talking about a \$750 expense but it's something that could save your life."

Two aboriginal cops contacted by the Montreal Gazette spoke of wearing expired safety equipment with one claiming he mended the fabric on his bulletproof vest with duct tape and safety pins.

“It’s the same with training. We’re supposed to be certified for firearm use every 12 months but I’ve seen us get a few months past that deadline,” said Cutnam. “These are basic job skills for a police officer. I know we do good work, we work hard, we love the job, we want to help people but too often it’s a case of let’s try to push it and do more with what we have.”

Recruiting and retaining talented officers is another challenge in Quebec First Nations. The starting salary on most aboriginal police forces is about \$41,000 per year — which matches the wages offered by the Sûreté du Québec. But over time the wage gap between SQ officers and constables on reserves widens considerably.

After five years on the job, an SQ officer earns \$70,973 a year while their colleagues on reserves take home about \$47,000 annually. The three First Nation departments who provided statistics to the Montreal Gazette operate with a 12-year pay scale, which maxes out at \$53,000 per year.

A borrowed Breathalyzer

“My budget has been flat for about 10 years,” says Raynald Malec, chief of police for the Uashat and Maliotenam First Nations near Sept-Îles. “Just to keep up with salaries we have to skimp on training and equipment. We don’t even have a (Breathalyzer) machine, we recently borrowed one from the SQ.”

In contrast, Montreal’s police budget increased by 41 per cent between 2005 and 2015. Though it’s hardly scientific to compare a small department with the province’s largest municipal police force, budget increases are common in non-aboriginal communities.

The 12-officer Uashat police force gets \$1.6 million per year in funding split between the provincial and federal government — Canada pays 52 per cent with Quebec covering the rest. Malec says his officers face a unique set of challenges on a reserve grappling with suicide and mental illness.

Last year, there were four suicides in the small community, 16 suicide attempts and police had to intervene in 122 cases where people were in the throes of a mental health crisis.

The majority of Quebec’s 43 indigenous communities are policed by an aboriginal department. The federal and provincial government share funding responsibilities and adjust their contributions based on the reserve’s population, its level of criminality, its social problems and other factors.

Because of overcrowded housing conditions, chronic poverty and a disproportionately young population, officers in First Nations tend to see a lot of violent crime. Many First Nations thrive despite grappling with the legacy of residential schools, but rates of criminality are higher in isolated reserves.

‘It’s a revolving door’

“I’ve been accused of inflating our crime statistics but most of what we see is violent crime. You just can’t fake that, you can’t fake suicide attempts and aggravated assaults,” said Christian Awashish, Grand Chief of the Opitciwan First Nation.

While all of Quebec’s municipal and provincial police belong to labour unions, the majority of the province’s aboriginal cops aren’t covered by a collective agreement. This, despite the fact that they are qualified officers who graduated from the same police academy, the École Nationale de la Police.

“For non-native police officers on reserves, it’s basically a revolving door, you’re in and your out,” said one police source, who worked for two aboriginal police departments before moving on to a job in the city. “The work conditions aren’t great, the salary isn’t great and there’s opportunity elsewhere. So these departments — who are doing the best they can — keep having to train new recruits all the time. There’s no incentive to stay and serve.”

Recounting his time patrolling a remote reserve, the officer spoke of an armed standoff in which his partner was shot. While his partner bled from the leg and face, the officer exchanged gunfire with the suspect, holding on for hours until backup could arrive.

“Sometimes there’s no backup,” he said. “You can call but there’s nobody there ... Working in a city now, I’m happy that when I push my panic button on my radio, someone’s going to be there pretty quick.”

Quebec’s Public Security Department did not respond to questions sent by the Montreal Gazette on Thursday.

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/demand-outpaces-funding-on-quebecs-first-nation-reserves>

RCMP officers build bridges with Kwanlin Dün First Nation

We're here to help, we're not the bad guys, says RCMP Const. Kerry Jury

CBC News Posted: Feb 21, 2016 8:30 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 21, 2016 8:30 AM CT



Whitehorse RCMP constables Kerry Jury and Jordan Booth have been stationed at the Kwanlin Dün First Nation since the start of the year. (Mike Rudyk/CBC)

There are a couple of new faces at the Kwanlin Dün First Nation in Whitehorse — RCMP constables whose primary assignment is to police the community, and hopefully build trust while they're at it.

"I know the relationship between the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and the police isn't great right now," said Const. Kerry Jury, one of the new officers. "Just hoping to improve that a little bit."

Jury, along with Const. Jordan Booth, have been stationed in the community since the start of the year. They work out of a small office at the First Nation's administrative building.



'We're here and visible,' said Cst. Jury. 'We're just looking to help the community.' (Submitted by KDFN)

"We're here and visible," Jury said, "to have people know that we are around, and we are here to help, and we're not the bad guys."

The First Nation had a strained relationship with police for many years. The community has seen its share of violent and drug-related crime, and police weren't always viewed as being responsive. Officers stationed at Kwanlin Dün in the past were routinely called away to other parts of the city.

Booth said spending time in the community and getting to know its citizens, helps "build a little bit more trust."

"Everybody deserves to live in a safe community," he said.

'It's going to take some time'

The move to station RCMP officers at the First Nation grew out of a [2010 report on Yukon policing](#), called "Sharing Common Ground." The report made a series of recommendations to improve relations between officers and the communities they served — especially First Nations.

Jeanie Dendys, Kwanlin Dün's director of justice, said having officers work at Kwanlin Dün is making a difference, and said the constables are building bridges.

"The community has a chance to get to know them, build a relationship with them," Dendys said. "This will certainly enhance safety within the community."



'We know we have a long ways to go, but some things are improving, for sure,' said Jeanie Dendys, director of justice at Kwanlin Dün. (Mike Rudyk/CBC)

Dendys also acknowledged that the community still struggles. Drugs and violence are persistent problems.

"We know that's still there," she said. "It's going to take some time to really see change in the community."

But, she said, there are reasons for optimism — the First Nation has been tracking statistics over the past several years, and police have been receiving fewer calls. A good sign, Dendys said.

"Things are getting better. We see it."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/kwanlin-dun-first-nations-ramp-whitehorse-1.3456501>

Thunder Bay a step closer to developing an Aboriginal Peoples Court

Members working on the project have visited similar courts in Brantford and Toronto to gather information

CBC News Posted: Feb 22, 2016 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 22, 2016 6:08 AM ET



Frances Wesley, with the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, says she's very hopeful that an Aboriginal Peoples Court can be established in the city. (Cathy Alex/CBC)

Members of the group working to develop an Aboriginal Peoples Court in Thunder Bay are hopeful their efforts may result in a pilot project in the near future.

Although part of the justice system, an Aboriginal Peoples Court is designed by Indigenous people, and is holistic in nature, said Frances Wesley, the urban judicial partnership capacity builder and trainer with the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre.

"We definitely have to make changes in the current system right now because it's not working for us," she said.

One difference from a standard court is that the judge comes down from the bench and joins a circle, which may include Crown and defense lawyers, Gladue writers, support workers, and others associated with the accused.

The circle allows the individual to speak directly to everyone there, said Wesley.

"It's important because I think the individual takes responsibility for what he or she has done wrong, and that's the beginning of the healing process," she said.

Members of the group working on the project have already visited similar courts in Brantford and Toronto, and will head to Vancouver in the next few weeks to gather more information to help them decide what might work best in Thunder Bay, said Wesley.

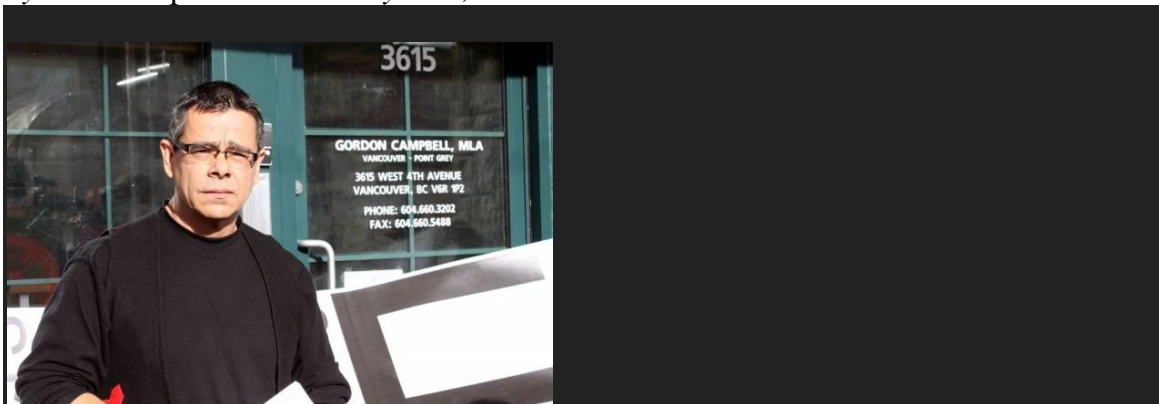
"The Truth and Reconciliation report outlines many recommendations that we need to follow and we need to be the change-makers in our community and make it happen because otherwise we're just spinning wheels," she said.

The friendship centre and Nishnawbe-Aski (NAN) Legal Services hosted a forum Friday for community leaders and service providers to get their perspective on establishing an Aboriginal Peoples Court in Thunder Bay.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/thunder-bay-aboriginal-peoples-court-1.3456227>

Aboriginal people overrepresented in B.C.'s massive number of inmates denied bail

by Travis Lupick on February 24th, 2016 at 1:56 PM



Scott Clark, the executive director of the Aboriginal Life in Vancouver Enhancement Society, likens the extent to which aboriginal people account for a disproportionate number of B.C. inmates to an extension of colonialism.

On February 15, there were 1,685 people in B.C. lockups who had not been convicted of a crime.

In the 2014-15 fiscal year, 12,964 citizens were similarly kept behind bars while they awaited trial. As the *Straight* [previously reported](#), they account for more than 60 percent of the province's total imprisoned population.

Now a B.C. Ministry of Justice response to a freedom-of-information request reveals the extent to which aboriginal people are overrepresented in these numbers.

It shows that although aboriginal people account for less than five percent of B.C.'s population, they make up 31 percent of B.C. inmates held on remand.

Scott Clark, executive director of the Aboriginal Life in Vancouver Enhancement Society, described this situation as an extension of "colonialism" once embodied in Canada's residential schools.

“We have indifference within the system,” he told the *Straight*. “And when you have these types of indifferences, that’s when you get these statistics. It’s just another form of racism.”

The fact that aboriginal people appear in disproportionate numbers throughout the justice system is not new. Depending on the source and the year, they make up between 24 percent and 28 percent of B.C. inmates. But the figure of 31 percent for those held on remand suggests judges are more likely to deny bail for aboriginal people compared to white people accused of a crime.

For Caucasians, almost the exact same statistical discrepancy exists, but in their favour. Although white people account for 60 percent of B.C.’s prison population, they are only 57 percent of those denied bail.

The Ministry of Justice did not make a representative available for an interview.

Presented with this data, **David Eby**, NDP MLA for Vancouver–Point Grey, said this could be for a number of reasons. He suggested that part of the problem likely begins with aboriginal people being more likely to live in poverty.

“We should be asking the very serious question of whether aboriginal people are overrepresented in remand simply because they are more likely to be homeless,” Eby said via phone.

He also noted how the proportion of remand inmates who are aboriginal has grown, to 31 percent, up from 22 percent in 2007-08, the last year for which data is available.

“Things are getting worse,” Eby concluded. “There is a serious problem here.”

Direct Link: <http://www.straight.com/news/643941/aboriginal-people-overrepresented-bcs-massive-number-inmates-denied-bail>

Willow Cree Healing Lodge escapee captured over a year later

By [David Giles](#) Senior Web Producer Global News
February 25, 2016 12:11 pm



Allan Roderick Wright, who escaped during a temporary escorted absence from Willow Cree Healing Lodge over a year ago, has been captured.

A man who escaped custody in Saskatchewan while on a temporary escorted absence over a year ago has been captured. Allan Roderick Wright was apprehended by Calgary police Wednesday evening.

Wright had been at large since December 2014 when he escaped while on the Moosomin First Nation during his escorted temporary absence from Willow Cree Healing Lodge.

He was serving a three-year five-month sentence at the time for assault with a weapon, assault causing bodily harm, break and enter, and forcible confinement.

Corrections Service of Canada officials say they will be conducting an investigation into Wright's escape.

Willow Cree Healing Lodge is a minimum security federal facility near Duck Lake

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2540510/willow-cree-healing-lodge-escapee-captured-over-a-year-later/>

Aboriginal Education & Youth

Aboriginal education conference looks to help usher in a new age in B.C.

FRANK PEEBLES / PRINCE GEORGE CITIZEN
FEBRUARY 19, 2016 09:19 PM



Shelly Niemi, School District 57's Aboriginal education department manager, is seen in a file photo. - Citizen file photo

The proof is in: aboriginal kids just needed some cultural context and sense of inclusion in school in order to make the grade. A conference on Friday aims to take that to the next level in School District 57.

A Euro-centric education system consistently produced underwhelming First Nations graduates. Since the time residential schools were phased out, only slim percentages of aboriginal kids went on to graduate from high school and thus take advantage of that certification to gain post-secondary degrees and meaningful employment.

In 2009, the aboriginal graduation rate in SD57 was 32 per cent.

In 2015, that number exploded to 61 per cent, after years of dedicated efforts by the provincial government and individual school districts to address the dearth.

Now, a provincewide new curriculum will implement a degree of First Nations content across all subjects, and some amount of aboriginal history (including residential school atrocities) will form the content in history and social studies courses. For the first time in B.C. history, the founding cultures will be noticeably reflected in school materials and classroom dialogue.

To help with these transitions and celebrate the dawning of a new education age in B.C., the SD57 Aboriginal Education (AbEd) department is holding a one-day workshop for teachers, administrators, support staff, bus drivers, custodians, everyone involved in local education in any way.

It is the largest professional development session in AbEd history - 750 seats available. Although it is optional to attend, the early signup numbers were huge.

"It is so exciting for us to see that response, telling us that people in the education system across our district are really interested in seeing those outcomes get as good as they can

be, and changing the relationship between aboriginal culture and mainstream culture from now on," said Shelly Niemi, AbEd manager. "People can make a difference. It's not about books and systems, it is about people. So come, be a part of it, because we've already seen those numbers turn around like never before because people took it upon themselves to implement a new approach."

The event takes place at the Civic Centre from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.,

so there is plenty of parking available and also buses running from each high school parking lot (loading at 8 a.m., departing at 8:30 a.m.) so participants can park and ride close to home.

The event will be the debut for *Crow Brings A Message*, a locally made documentary about aboriginal learning and learners. It has not been seen by the public since its completion.

Guest speakers will also share their expertise, people like author and professor Marie Battiste, and First Nations Child & Family Caring Society boss and author (and former Kelly Road secondary school student) Cindy Blackstock.

"We have already had a look at the new curriculum, it is being introduced in phases, and we are here as a department to help schools and administrators and individual teachers to handle the changes as they come," said Niemi.

"I don't sense any pushback, but there are questions because it is an unknown. How do you best convey this to students? How do you remain respectful when it's not the teachers' own background? What are the appropriate resources to supplement the curriculum? How do we as teachers and administrators talk about residential schools if we haven't had personal contact with that history? Not every aboriginal student in your classroom is necessarily from the same First Nation, so how does that get handled respectfully for everyone?

"These are really practical thoughts and sensible questions, and this symposium is all about getting as many people into the same room as possible to efficiently answer some of those questions. We also expect the conversation will cause new questions to come up, and that's great, it is a process we are here to support all along the way. We want teachers to feel, and truthfully, that they can confidently do their work with this new material."

This school year, about 66,000 students in the province are self-identified as being of aboriginal descent. That accounts for approximately 10.5 per cent of the overall student population.

In SD57, Niemi estimated the local numbers to be 3,294 aboriginal students amounting to 28 per cent of the student population. If only 32 per cent of those were to graduate, she

said, imagine the economic drag that causes and imagine the lost opportunity for such a large number of people to contribute as business owners, employees in coveted jobs, motivated volunteers, community leaders, etc.

The most important point, said Niemi, is boosting aboriginal student success comes at no expense in the success of non-aboriginal students and may well enhance all students' outcomes.

Anyone wishing to attend the symposium or know more about AbEd initiatives can call 250-562-4843 or visit the department's website at www.abed.sd57.bc.ca.

See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/aboriginal-education-conference-looks-to-help-usher-in-a-new-age-in-b-c-1.2178496#sthash.pIK2ooqB.dpuf>

Deal opens doors for Metis students

By [Sarah Moore](#)

Saturday, February 20, 2016 1:55:26 EST PM



A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on Friday at Northern College to formalize a bursary program to help Métis students in Timmins and the surrounding area pursue post-secondary education. From left are Fred Gibbons, president and CEO of Northern College, France Picotte, chair of the Métis Nation of Ontario, Jean-Pierre Nadon, campus director of Collège Boréal in Timmins and Rachel Pineault, Detour Gold's vice-president of human resources and Aboriginal affairs.

TIMMINS - A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed on Friday solidified the creation of a bursary program to help Métis students in Timmins and the surrounding area pursue post-secondary education.

Representatives from the Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), Detour Gold, Northern College and Collège Boréal were present to sign the agreement at Northern College on Friday afternoon.

The bursary comes as a result of the 2012 Impact and Benefit Agreement between the MNO and Detour Gold, and will be made available to Métis students in Region 3 who are pursuing careers in the mining industry.

While the funding has been available for two years, the signing formalized the bursary

program and the partnership between Detour Gold, the MNO and the two colleges. “Today I was very happy just to know it was all happening because it’s kind of been in place but it has never been official,” said Nancy Raymond, director of advancement at Collège Boréal, who spoke to The Daily Press via telephone. “I think that our communities in the North need to know that these big companies like Detour Gold and the MNO and post-secondary institutions are working together for our communities and students to make it better.”

France Picotte, chairwoman of the MNO, is also happy to have seen three years of hard work finally come to fruition.

“Up until a few years ago, many of our Métis students never even thought of going to college or university and now with this bursary, they can start thinking about it and finishing their post-secondary school,” said Picotte, who was on hand to sign the MOU on Friday. “I’m excited for that and for the future, because the youth are the future, and the more educated they are — the better future we’ll all have.”

She added, “It’s nice to see that the Métis community is alive, well and youthful and this just goes to show that we’re still here and we want to participate in the community.”

Rachel Pineault, Detour Gold’s vice-president of human resources and Aboriginal affairs, said the company shares the MNO’s belief in the importance of providing access to education for Métis youth.

“Education is critical to allowing the youth to access better jobs, grow in skilled work placements and

at Detour we’re going to be here in the area for 23 years so we have long-term jobs, careers, and opportunities for people to grow,” she explained. “We have Métis people employed currently and in training and this gives the youth the opportunity to get local education in whatever language they choose, to stay up north and work up north.”

Fred Gibbons, the president and CEO of Northern College said the signing of the MOU was an “exceptional moment.”

He explained that the bursary, which amounts to \$30,000 per year, will eventually become self-perpetuating because the money is invested each year and the returns on that investment are also given to qualifying students.

This means the bursary could eventually grow to \$300,000 in the minimum 10 years that Detour Gold has committed to remain a part of the project, he said.

“That will become a very significant sum of money but it’s not an investment in college, it’s an investment in the youth of Northern Ontario,” he explained.

The bursary program has already proven to be beneficial to Métis learners, he added.

“For the graduates that have been successful, we’ve seen lives transformed because of that small investment on the front-end. It made something that seemed out of reach and impossible, a reality for them,” he said.

Pineault is also looking forward to seeing the positive opportunities that will come from the bursary in the future.

“The agreement lives for the length of the mine, so that’s a pretty large commitment,” she said. “It’s something that’s really important to us from an education perspective and for the MNO to allow the youth to reach for their dreams.”

Direct Link: <http://www.timminspress.com/2016/02/20/deal-opens-doors-for-metis-students>

Indigenous university students more likely to be stopped by police, survey says

JEREMY WARREN, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Published on: February 20, 2016 | Last Updated: February 20, 2016 11:47 AM CST



Saskatoon Police Chief Clive Weighill stands and listens to concerns of citizens protesting against his police force, Oct. 7, 2015 before a public consultation on policing took place inside TCU Place.

Indigenous university students in Saskatoon and Regina are 1.6 times more likely to be stopped by police on the street compared to non-indigenous students, according to a new survey aimed at gathering data on racial profiling in the prairie provinces.

Discourse Media surveyed 850 students in Saskatoon, Regina and Winnipeg about their experience with police as part of a larger collaboration with a Maclean's magazine article published this week that investigates the incarceration rates of indigenous people. The researchers set out to investigate the large amount of anecdotal evidence of racial profiling.

“We were asked to look for quantitative evidence. There was a lot of anecdotal evidence coming from indigenous people in Saskatoon and Regina and Winnipeg,” said Erin Millar, Discourse Media co-founder and CEO. “Every time a complaint came out, police said either it was an isolated incident or it wasn’t a widespread problem in the police force.”

The survey asked students “have you ever had an involuntary interaction with police” and how many times they had been involuntarily stopped by police since attending their post-

secondary school. Results show the “odds of an indigenous student in the sampled population of being involuntarily stopped by police is 1.6 times higher than a non-indigenous student,” according to the survey.

Indigenous students were also more likely to believe “their indigeneity was not viewed positively by police,” according to the survey. They are less comfortable around police and more likely to agree that “certain racial groups are treated unfairly by police officers.”

The survey also asked students to use three words to describe how they feel about police; the most common responses from non-indigenous students were “helpful” and “authority” while indigenous students responded most often with “racist” and “scary.”

As part of the project, the researchers sent freedom of information requests for racial data to police in Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver. The researchers did not obtain any relevant data regarding race and street checks, according to the survey.

Saskatoon’s city police force has recently come under fire for its street check policy, which is sometimes referred to as “carding.” The city’s Board of Police Commissioners recently voted to seek public input on the issue, since a provincial policy on street checks is in the works.

“I have not seen the survey or sample numbers for Saskatoon,” police Chief Clive Weighill said in an emailed statement.

“There appears to be an important reality not factored into this conclusion. Unfortunately, marginalized Aboriginal people living in our inner city are victimized four to five times higher than in other areas of the city. It’s incumbent upon the police to have high visibility and interactions with that community to reduce the opportunity for crime and to reduce further victimization.”

Saskatoon police do not collect racial data during street checks, a spokeswoman said.

“Agencies, and not just police, have been hesitant to collect data about race and confront some of the issues around race in Canada,” Millar said. “No agency wants to open themselves up to critiques.”

Vancouver-based Discourse Media is an independent company that works with other media organizations to produce original journalism on complex issues. The survey was paid for in part by Canadian Journalists for Free Expression.

Direct Link: <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/indigenous-university-students-more-likely-to-be-stopped-by-police-survey-says>

U of C introduces new program to address need for indigenous dialogue

by 660 NEWS STAFF

Posted Feb 20, 2016 2:05 pm MST



A new graduate program aims to show teachers the other side of Canada's history with indigenous peoples.

The University of Calgary is acting on recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report, with a new Masters of Education program focused on history told from outside the colonial perspective.

"We encounter students in our First Nations, Metis [and] Inuit class who become very angry at the mere fact that they have not been taught the whole of history," Yvonne Poitras Pratt, a professor at the university, said. "So many of these students are hearing about residential schools for the first time."

She says through the Werklund School of Education, educators will be taught how to use literature, multimedia, visual arts and other platforms to introduce that whole history into classrooms.

"We have to consider that there's a history that's been deliberately silenced and ignored. So that's what we bring into that program offering," Poitras Pratt said.

The schools says people of different professions such as social workers or psychologists, can be accepted into the program as it also benefits their professional needs.

Direct Link: <http://www.660news.com/2016/02/20/u-of-c-introduces-new-program-to-address-need-for-indigenous-dialogue/>

Feds won't appeal First Nations welfare ruling

20 hours ago

OTTAWA — The federal government will not appeal a landmark human rights ruling that found it discriminated against children on reserves in its funding of child welfare services.

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision handed down last month said First Nations are hurt by the level of services provided by the government and, in some cases, denied services as a result of the government's involvement.

The government said today it would not seek judicial review of the judgment.

Some have suggested it will cost hundreds of millions of dollars to rectify the welfare situation.

Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould says the ruling shows the present system is failing.

She calls that unacceptable in this day and age.

"This government agrees that we can and must do better," Wilson-Raybould said in a statement.

"We believe that this decision is pointing us in the right direction, as a country, and we will not seek a judicial review of the decision. This is part of the new relationship and spirit of reconciliation that our government is committed to."

The tribunal found the federal government failed to provide the same level of child welfare services that the provinces provided off-reserve and as a result, countless First Nations children have ended up in foster care, away from their families.

Direct Link: <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/6328253-feds-won-t-appeal-first-nations-welfare-ruling/>

UPEI aboriginal student group looks for more funding

More predictable funding would allow Mawi'omi Centre to better plan out activities, says rep

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 23, 2016 10:01 AM AT Last Updated: Feb 23, 2016 4:03 PM AT



Jenna Burke is the aboriginal student mentor at the Mawi'omi Centre. (CBC)

A group that has been representing aboriginal students at UPEI for almost a decade says it's time the university increased funding for the group.

The Mawi'omi Centre receives space and funding from the university to pay for an aboriginal student mentor and a part-time student advisor. For any additional funding, the centre must apply to the university's student affairs department.

Jenna Burke, the aboriginal student mentor, said more predictable funding would allow the centre to better plan out its activities.

Burke said the centre appreciates all UPEI has done for it, but the part-time staff isn't enough to reach all the students and more money for outreach is needed.

"There are some aboriginal students that I have met that have gone through UPEI and didn't even know that this centre was here," she said.

UPEI says many other university services are working with part-time employees and have to apply for outside funding for extra programming. It said juggling budgets is hard, but the centre is a priority.



The Mawi'omi Centre has been welcoming and assisting aboriginal students since 2008. (CBC)

"The university is very dedicated to the Mawi'omi Centre and creating that student space for support for social events like they're talking about and those sorts of things," said Treena Smith, UPEI's manager of student affairs.

Julie Bull, one of the original founders of the centre who is now working on her PhD studies, said places like the centre are integral to achieving academic goals.

"When I talk to students that are successful, almost exclusively they say it's because they were able to find a community," she said.

Burke has put a proposal in to the student affairs department for annual funding of just over \$75,000.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/upei-mawi-omi-centre-aboriginal-group-funding-1.3459649>

Aboriginal Health

Overcrowding in Inuit homes linked to children's lung infections: new study

"Interventions are urgently needed to address the overcrowding issue"

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, February 19, 2016 - 11:45 am



Overcrowded housing in Nunavut is linked to serious lung infections among children, a new study says. (FILE PHOTO)

Overcrowding in Nunavut households appears to explain why young Inuit children in Canada suffer one of the highest rates of lower respiratory tract infections in the world.

That's according to a new a study published Feb. 15 in the International Journal of Circumpolar Health.

"Interventions are urgently needed to address the overcrowding issue, as they may have the greatest health benefits and further studies are warranted to examine the impact of decreasing household crowding on the health of Inuit children," say the respiratory disease experts, who work at Montreal's Ste-Justine Hospital, McGill University and the Ottawa-based Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario,

Further studies are needed to examine the impact of decreasing household crowding on the respiratory health of these children, say authors Sze Man Tse, Hope Weiler and Tom Kovesi, who looked at the relationship between food insecurity and severe respiratory infections in Inuit children under two years of age and health centre visits for respiratory problems over the past year.

Lung infections such as respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, are serious — and costly — health issues in Canada's North: hospitalization rates for lower respiratory tract infections are 10 times higher among Inuit children than other Canadian children, they note in their study.

But although child and adult food insecurity affect seven in 10 Inuit, this is “not significantly associated” with lung infections, said the new study, which looked at 388 children aged three to five years who participated in a cross-sectional survey of the health of preschool Inuit children in Nunavut from 2007 to 2008.

The majority of these children had been breastfed and had been exposed to tobacco smoke from their mothers' smoking or passively in the house.

Eight in 10 children were found to lack enough vitamin D, which can lead to weak immune systems and preventable diseases such as rickets.

The study also explored the relationship between vitamin D status and lung infections, but found no link between vitamin D deficiency and lung infections.

“Supplementation is clearly beneficial in those cases. However, our study results do not demonstrate an association between vitamin D insufficiency or deficiency and reported respiratory infections among Inuit children,” the authors said.

The key factor in respiratory infections was overcrowding, at levels three times higher than generally accepted levels of “crowded,” they said.

Most households were crowded, defined as more than one person per room, with the median household crowding index at three people per room.

Household crowding and higher birth weight — possibly connected to maternal diabetes — were also associated with reported severe chest infections before the age of two years, the study found.

Canadian Inuit children have one of the highest rates of lower respiratory tract infections in the world, with admissions to hospital up to 10 times more frequent compared with other Canadian population, the study noted.

Other studies have documented “an alarming hospitalization rate” of 484 per 1,000 infants under six months of age for bronchiolitis, an infection of the smaller airways in the lower part of the lung.

Rates of complications are also high, with 12.8 per cent of admitted children requiring intubation to breathe.

Previous studies have shown that medical evacuations and treatment for lung infections among young Inuit children cost the Government of Nunavut and Quebec — where in

Nunavik rates of lung infections and overcrowding are similarly high — millions of dollars a year.

Other studies have also shown overcrowding makes Inuit sick from stress.

In a 2014 study, researchers found that overcrowding causes serious wear and tear on the body's major systems: heart, lungs, nerves, immunity and metabolism.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674overcrowding_in_inuit_homes_linked_to_childrens_lung_infections_new_st/

Angus takes aim at Health department's denials for indigenous children

By: Kristy Kirkup, The Canadian Press

Posted: 02/19/2016 1:49 PM | Last Modified: 02/19/2016 10:34 PM |

OTTAWA - Aboriginal children are denied critical medical and orthodontic procedures as a matter of standard government practice, says NDP indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus, who is demanding answers from Health Minister Jane Philpott.

In a letter sent to the minister this week, Angus said the minister will have a hard time claiming cases are reviewed in a manner that puts children first, based on sweeping departmental rejection rates.



NDP MP Charlie Angus stands in the House of Commons during question period on Parliament Hill in Ottawa on June 9, 2015. NDP indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus is demanding answers from Health Minister Jane Philpott on the number of indigenous children who are denied medical and orthodontic procedures. Angus says he was shocked to learn that rejections seem to be a matter of standard practice within Philpott's department.

"We're dealing with families that are in some ways some of the most marginalized in the country, those who don't have access to lawyers, that don't have access to advocates, so when they get turned down by a faceless bureaucracy, they're left on their own," Angus said in an interview.

"To me, not just as a politician but as a father of three daughters, it really sickens me in my stomach. How can this be the standard practice?"

Internal government documents outline the systemic discrimination, Angus added.

"What you see from the internal documents, it almost looks like a scam," he said.

"They admit internally that they routinely deny access even in emergency cases but people don't know where to appeal, dentists are refusing to sometimes ... deal with the department anymore and when people do

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/angus-takes-aim-at-health-departments-denials-for-indigenous-children--369455892.html>

Alberta mother's battle puts spotlight on First Nations medical care rejections

NDP MP Charlie Angus took up case in the House of Commons

CBC News Posted: Feb 21, 2016 5:00 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 21, 2016 5:00 AM ET



Kennedy Shiner, 14, has a severe overbite and molars growing in sideways. Her treatment was deemed medically necessary but the federal government has refused the claim. (CBC)

An Alberta mother is challenging the federal government over its refusal to pay for her daughter's medical care.

Stacey Shiner lives outside Calgary. Her daughter Kennedy is a member of the Sucker Creek First Nation. Kennedy has braces to correct a severe overbite and molars which were growing in sideways. The condition once left her suffering headaches and persistent discomfort.

"I couldn't really smile straight so I would never smile," Kennedy said.

Shiner applied to have her daughter's treatment covered by the federal government's Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, a program aimed at ensuring that First Nations and Inuit people receive medical care comparable to other Canadians.

Her daughter's orthodontist assured the government the treatment, which would cost more than \$8,000, was medically necessary and not merely cosmetic. But Health Canada nonetheless rejected the family's claim.

"It made me pretty frustrated," Shiner said.



Stacey Shiner is fighting the federal government over its refusal to pay for her 14-year-old daughter Kennedy's medical care. (CBC)

The family appealed the government's decision but that, too, was turned down. Shiner says she spoke to other parents and realized she wasn't alone.

"They're denying everything. They're not financing anything," Shiner said.

Shiner says this is not the first time the family has had a claim rejected. In 2008, after surgeons removed a tumour from behind her daughter's eye, Shiner says Health Canada refused to pay for prescription eye drops and suggested her daughter use over-the-counter Visine instead.

This time around, Shiner says she decided to challenge the government not so much for her own family but for others who might be denied even more vital treatments.

"There's other children out there that have severe medical issues," she said.

"I don't think it's OK to stand by and let it happen."



Cindy Blackstock, director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada has taken up Kennedy Shiner's case. (CBC)

Shiner approached Cindy Blackstock, director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. Blackstock recently won a landmark decision before a federal human rights tribunal, successfully arguing Ottawa has systematically discriminated against aboriginal youth on funding for child and family services. She connected the family with a Toronto lawyer, who agreed to help them challenge the government's ruling.

"This happens on a regular basis," Blackstock said of the Health Department's rejection.

"What's not very regular about it is you have a parent here who has been so persistent in trying to appeal it," she said. "Many parents get lost in the bureaucracy."

New Democrat MP Charlie Angus also took up the family's case, raising it in Parliament.

"I find it shocking that it takes pressure in the House of Commons to deal with children whose cases are being denied," Angus said last Thursday as he urged the government to reconsider its rejection of the Shiners' claim.

80% rejected

To Angus, this case is just the tip of the iceberg. There have been, he says, at least 534 cases of aboriginal children whose claims for orthodontic care have been rejected. Families, he says, routinely meet a dead end when they launch an appeal in what is a three-stage process.

"Eighty per cent were rejected in the first round," Angus said.

"The few that went to the second round had a 99 per cent rejection rate. On the third round, 100 per cent of these children were denied by the bureaucrats at Health Canada," he said. "That is what systemic discrimination against these children looks like."

A spokesperson for Health Canada issued a statement Friday saying there are clear criteria and guidelines in place for dental coverage and that these are always followed. While reluctant to discuss individual cases, the spokesperson added the Shiners' case had been reviewed by four different orthodontists. The

spokesperson added the family's own orthodontist would be contacted to see if they could provide any further information.

The Shiners received word from Health Canada late this week that their case would be reviewed again. Their lawyer had been preparing to challenge the rejection of their claim in Federal Court. That is now on hold pending a final decision from Health Canada.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/mother-fights-for-daughter-medical-1.3456562>

Nunavut students promote healthy living through Inuit games

"It's about promoting culture, teaching people what Inuit games are"

LISA GREGOIRE, February 22, 2016 - 10:00 am



First year Nunavut Sivuniksavut student Donovan Gordon-Tootoo, explains how to leg wrestle for an instructional video on Inuit games Feb. 18 in Ottawa. (PHOTO BY LISA GREGOIRE)



Kyle Hainnu, left, and Donovan Gordon-Tootoo, demonstrate the armpull game in preparation for a video project on healthy living through traditional games. (PHOTO BY LISA GREGOIRE)

OTTAWA — Donovan Gordon-Tootoo may well end up in politics, like his uncle Hunter Tootoo, the Nunavut MP and federal fisheries minister.

But, on Feb. 18, Gordon-Tootoo was busy jumping high into the air and leg-wrestling with a friend.

Gordon-Tootoo and a handful of other Nunavut Sivuniksavut students in Ottawa are helping to promote healthy living and Inuit traditional games, thanks to a three-year grant from the Ontario government.

“Sharing our culture by staying healthy, I guess,” said Gordon-Tootoo, 18, who was born in Ottawa, but spent most of his life in Rankin Inlet.

“It means a lot to stay healthy in mind, body and spirit. That’s part of the reason I enjoy doing these games. You get to do all three in one.”

Through the Healthy Kids Community Challenge program, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is funding 45 projects around the province that help to promote exercise, activity and healthy eating.

Ottawa’s Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health is among six Aboriginal-specific organizations that received funding through the program. The balance went to 39 Ontario municipalities, including the City of Ottawa.

A spokesperson for Ontario Health said successful recipients are receiving between \$375,000 and \$1,125,000 over three years under the Healthy Kids program. Wabano will get \$525,000, Ontario Health said.

Fabienne Tougas, the project lead for Wabano, said as part of the first phase of the project, the organization has decided to make a series of short videos showing traditional Indigenous activities.

This way, Aboriginal youth can share cultural traditions with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal kids and promote active living at the same time.

“Our communities are different so our target population is different,” said Tougas.

“So what the city of Ottawa chooses to do will be different from what Wabano chooses to do. We know that urban Aboriginal [people] have different circumstances, different barriers to health, different assets than the general population.”

As part of the project, Wabano is partnering with Inuit, First Nations and Métis organizations across the city to make these videos, including the Ottawa Inuit Children’s Centre, Tungasuvvingat Inuit and Nunavut Sivuniksavut.

For the past few weeks, NS students have been tasked with picking a traditional game or activity they enjoy and writing an instructional script explaining how that game or activity.

A handful of students travelled to Wabano, located on Montreal Rd. in Ottawa’s Vanier neighbourhood on Feb. 18, so a videographer and director could film them reciting their instructional scripts and then demonstrating their activity.

Tougas is hoping to have three five-minute videos of Inuit games and traditions completed by the end of March. Those videos will be uploaded sometime in the spring to Wabano's YouTube channel and burned onto DVDs for educational purposes.

Kyle Hainnu, 21, who hails from Clyde River, said he enjoyed playing Inuit games when he was growing up but was never serious about it until he got to NS last fall.

Part of the NS program involves public performances and cultural demonstrations so students are taught how to drum, sing, dance and do traditional games.

Hainnu said once he started practicing at NS, he got skilled at some games, especially the one-foot high kick.

"I said, OK, I'll try," Hainnu said.

"And now he's one of the top ones," said Gordon-Tootoo, laughing.

"I guess it came naturally, I don't know," said Hainnu.

"It's like you're an Inuk or something," Gordon-Tootoo said.

Hainnu, who hopes to study computer science when he finishes at NS, said he was pleased to participate in the video project because he supports its goals.

"It's about promoting culture, teaching people what Inuit games are and showing them how it's done. It might increase interest in the games and our culture. It's a promotional thing," said Hainnu.

Both he and Gordon-Tootoo said they're settling into NS and enjoying learning about the history of Nunavut and improving their Inuktitut. But they say they miss hunting. And country foods.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavut_students_promote_healthy_living_through_inuit_games/

Statistics Canada says family, education important indicators for Inuit health

Study surveyed 2,900 Inuit as part of 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 23, 2016 7:00 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 23, 2016 7:00 AM CT



Maatalii Okalik, the president of the National Inuit Youth Council, says that 'the more that you feel that you're contributing to your community, the better that you feel about yourself,' when speaking about education as a key indicator for good health in Inuit. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

A new Statistics Canada study finds that close ties with extended family and higher levels of education are key social determinants to good health for Inuit, while poor housing conditions and difficulty accessing health care contribute to reports of poor health.

The study, titled [Assessing the social determinants of self-reported Inuit health in Inuit Nunangat](#), is based on the 2012 Aboriginal Peoples Survey. It surveyed over 2,900 Inuit aged 15 to 54 years in Nunavut, the northern Northwest Territories, Quebec, and Labrador.

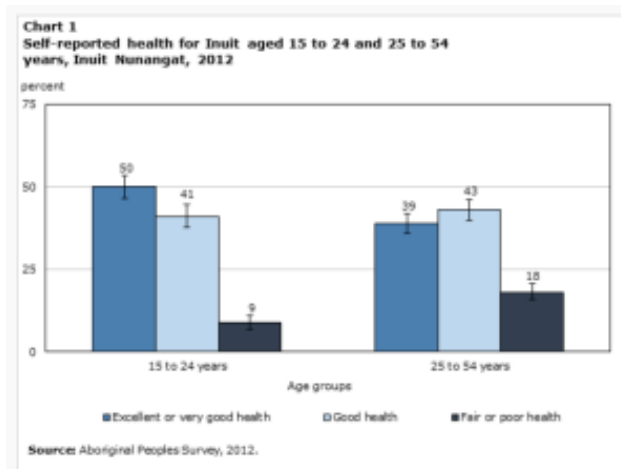


Thomas Anderson is one of the study's authors. The study surveyed over 2,900 Inuit living across Northern Canada. (submitted by Statistics Canada)

"Inuit with strong extended family ties within their community were more likely to report excellent or very good health, as were those who had completed post secondary school," said Thomas Anderson, one of the study's authors.

Among Inuit aged 15 to 24, more than 55 per cent of those with strong or very strong ties to extended family reported excellent or very good health. That's compared to 43 per cent of those with moderate, weak or very weak family connections.

The same was true for older Inuit between the ages of 25 to 54. Forty-two per cent of those with strong or very strong family ties said they were in excellent or very good health, in comparison to 34 per cent of those with weaker family relations.



A graph from the study, showing self-reported health for Inuit aged 15 to 24 and 25 to 54 years. (Statistics Canada)

Achieving higher education was also associated with excellent or very good self-reported health for both age groups. Just over 6 in 10 young Inuit between the ages of 15 to 24 who completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree had excellent or very good health.

This was significantly higher than the 41 per cent for those who had not completed high school.

Among 25 to 54 year olds, 46 per cent of those with post-secondary education had excellent or very good health compared to about one-third of those who did not have a high school diploma.

"The more that you feel that you're contributing to your community, the better that you feel about yourself," said Maatalii Okalik, the president of the National Inuit Youth Council.

Okalik added that when looking at the connection between higher education and health it becomes imperative to remove any barriers for Inuit youth to achieving their education goals.

Poor housing tied to poor health

"Housing seemed to have an effect for both age groups, but it was a different variable in each case," said Anderson. "For younger Inuit it seemed to be household crowding, which is defined as more than one person per room."

Only 46 per cent of Inuit aged 15 to 24 who live in a crowded home reported being in excellent or very good health, compared to 54 per cent of those who did not live in crowded homes.

For older Inuit it was living in a home in need of major repair.

"Those who live in a dwelling where major repairs were needed were less likely to be in excellent or good health," said Anderson.

Okalik explained that at the last meeting of the National Inuit Youth Council, the group heard of one young person who was living in a three-bedroom house with 14 people.

"Housing is imperative to a healthy lifestyle," said Okalik. "If there's overcrowded housing, it limits the ability for youth to sleep well, eat well, have a place to do homework."

Okalik added that federal funding is desperately needed to improve Nunavut's housing crisis, because poor housing can lead to serious health issues, including tuberculosis.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/statistics-canada-inuit-health-1.3459362>

First Nations Declare Health Emergency Over Medical Supply Shortage, Suicide Epidemic

CP | By Colin Perkel

Posted: 02/24/2016 2:47 pm EST Updated: 02/24/2016 4:59 pm EST

THE CANADIAN PRESS 

TORONTO — First Nations leaders from northern Ontario declared a public-health emergency on Thursday related to what they called a dire shortage of basic medical supplies and an epidemic of suicides among young people.

The declaration — essentially a desperate plea for help — calls for urgent action from the federal and provincial governments to address a crisis they said has resulted in needless suffering and deaths.

"We are in a state of shock," Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon of the Mushkegowuk Council said wiping away tears. "When is enough? It is sad. Waiting is not an option any more. We have to do something."

The declaration calls on governments to respond within 90 days by, among other things, meeting with First Nation leaders and coming up with a detailed intervention plan that includes ensuring communities have access to safe, clean drinking water.

'It's not like the government doesn't know these things'

At a news conference at a downtown hotel, the leaders screened a video of Norman Shewaybick, whose wife Laura died last fall shortly after going into respiratory distress in their remote community in Webequie. As the desperate husband held her hand, the nursing station in the community ran out of the oxygen that might have saved her life.

"We hear stories like this almost on a daily basis," said Alvin Fiddler, grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which has 35,000 members in 49 communities across the northern Ontario.

"It's not like the government doesn't know these things."

Fiddler cited the cases of two four-year-olds who died of rheumatic fever caused by strep throat in 2014, and suicides by children as young as 10.

"We're talking about institutional racism in Canada's and Ontario's health-care system." Governments, the leaders said, have failed to act on numerous reports about the deficiencies in health-care services, including one from the auditor general last year, and another aboriginal leaders delivered in January on the rash of suicides, the latest just last week in Moose Factory.

'Discrimination' resulting in substandard health care

First Nations communities, many still dealing with the brutal after-effects of the residential school system, are rife with diseases such as hepatitis C and diabetes that should have been prevented or better treated, are short on medical supplies and basic diagnostic equipment, and have a serious substance-abuse problem, the leaders said.

What's clear, they said, is that federal and provincial health policies have failed them, resulting in a substandard level of health care mainstream Canada would never tolerate.

"We're talking about discrimination" said Isadore Day, Ontario regional chief. "We're talking about institutional racism in Canada's and Ontario's health-care system."



Ontario regional chief Isadore Day says the cost of doing nothing for First Nations peoples has had a drastic impact. (Photo: CP)

Day said First Nations are hoping the new Liberal government in Ottawa will finally respond after years of seeing their pleas for help fall on deaf political ears.

"We have recently come out of a decade of darkness under the previous Harper government," he said.

"As Canada and the provinces and territories look at a new health accord, they must understand... the cost of doing nothing over the last decade has had a drastic impact on the people of the North."

"It's something that we all have to tackle. It's everybody's responsibility."

There was no immediate response from the federal government to the emergency declaration.

However, Ontario's aboriginal affairs minister, David Zimmer, said he hoped to talk to provincial and federal health ministers as well as to Fiddler about what he called the serious problems.

"Health issues for First Nations, especially in the remote communities, are always a challenge and, in cases, are in fact emergencies," Zimmer said. "It's something that we all have to tackle. It's everybody's responsibility."

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/02/24/we-are-in-a-state-of-shock-first-nations-declare-health-emergency_n_9307962.html

Somebody's Daughter women's wellness program expands in Nunavut

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 24, 2016 7:58 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 24, 2016 7:58 AM CT



The Somebody's Daughter program operates short on-the-land programs each summer. (submitted by the Kivalliq Inuit Association)

A popular program for women in the Kivalliq is undergoing some changes this year.

For years, Somebody's Daughter has operated a short on-the-land program each summer. Now it will be a larger program, which will consist of a number of workshops over two years.

Bernadette Dean, who works in the social development department at the Kivalliq Inuit Association, says the program uses sewing and Inuit traditions to teach women about mental wellness.



The Somebody's Daughter program uses sewing and Inuit traditions to teach women about mental wellness. (submitted by the Kivalliq Inuit Association)

"We wanted to do follow up with the women to help them develop confidence and to help them develop leadership skills and address many issues in their community so they have more positive experiences for all."

Status of Women Canada is funding the program for 14 women in the region. They'll learn about setting goals and dealing with challenging social issues.

Singer-songwriter Susan Aglukark is set to facilitate one of the workshops.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/somebodys-daughter-kivalliq-program-1.3460940>

PM Trudeau promises ‘real money’ for First Nation health and infrastructure

National News | February 24, 2016 by APTN National News



APTN National News

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Wednesday he would be putting “real money” toward fixing the health and infrastructure crisis in many First Nation communities.

Trudeau made the pledge while responding to question in the House of Commons over a state of emergency declared by 33 First Nations in the Sioux Lookout area of northern Ontario.

“We need to fix a relationship that has broken over the past decades and, indeed, centuries between Canada and Indigenous peoples,” said Trudeau. “That is why this government has pledged to renew a new relationship, putting real money forward to build support on infrastructure, health, on a broad range of things and creating a true nation-to-nation relationship.”

Trudeau was pressed on the issue during question period by NDP leader Tom Mulcair who called on the government to do something to deal with the health crisis gripping the First Nation communities that are home to 30,000 people.

“Another First Nations community in northern Ontario has just declared a state of emergency, not because of a weather disaster or because of any accident, but because of the everyday reality there that is simply unacceptable in our country,” said Mulcair.

Trudeau has already promised his government would be investing \$2.6 billion in new funding for First Nation education and that his government would be clearing all First Nations off Indigenous Affairs’ water advisory list within four years.

It’s expected the Liberal government’s plan to roll out the promised billions to First Nations will be contained in the federal budget scheduled for unveiling on March 22.

Earlier in the day, chiefs with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) held a press conference in Toronto declaring the state of emergency.

“The many urgent and long-standing health issues that plague our communities are well-documented and the time for action is now,” said Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. “We are calling on all levels of government to commit to a plan of action to address this crisis.”

NAN is the umbrella organization which represents the Sioux Lookout area First Nations.

The health system in these First Nation communities is so underfunded and broken that children have died from treatable ailments. In 2014, two four-year-olds died from rheumatic fever.

“The health system provided to First Nations is an atrocious mess, which has led to the health crisis we are facing today,” said Solomon Mamakwa, health director with the Shibogama Health Authority. “We are not even allowed to access all mainstream health services and supports. This has led to the loss of many of our people, including children. This type of system is not tolerated or acceptable in mainstream society. Why are we expected to accept this as Indigenous peoples?”

NAN said in a statement it expects to meet with federal and provincial officials within the next 90 days to develop a plan to end the health crisis in the communities.

Health Minister Jane Philpott told reporters in Ottawa department officials were on the ground dealing with the ongoing crisis.

“They are meeting with officials at the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority,” said Philpott. “They will be working with local First Nation chiefs as well as provincial health advisers and we will be addressing these concerns.”

Ontario Aboriginal Affairs Minister David Zimmer said in a statement emailed to *APTN* that he would be working with NAN and federal officials to deal with the crisis.

“Improving access to health and social services and improving outcomes for First Nations, especially in remote communities, are key issues that we all have to tackle together,” said Zimmer. “Whether they be health-care services, education outcomes or over-representation in child welfare, we need to re-think how we support, resource and empower Indigenous communities.”

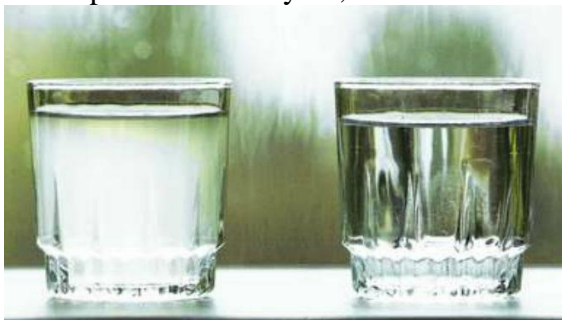
Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/24/pm-trudeau-promises-real-money-for-first-nation-health-and-infrastructure/>

LEBRUN: Health and safety equality for First Nations, minorities

Michelle LeBrun

Published February 25, 2016 - 8:07am

Last Updated February 25, 2016 - 8:10am



Bill No. 111 deals with the issue of environmental racism. The Bill seeks to have the government at least admit there's a problem in the province. (CP)

In July 2013, The Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act was passed into law and came into force on Nov. 1, 2013.

Three years later, we have yet to see how government will implement changes that improve water safety in our First Nation communities.

An over-arching question is why do aboriginal people need a law to be entitled to the same health and safety protections that all other Canadians enjoy?

A relatively new term is "environmental racism," used when a disproportionate number of industries that produce toxic waste and public dumps are situated close to racialized communities.

In fact, Bill No. 111, currently before the Nova Scotia legislature, deals with this very issue.

Why does it matter to me?

For the past 16 years, I have been afraid to drink the water in my community, Pictou Landing First Nation.

I brought my kids up on bottled water despite being told the water is safe to drink.

By whose standards is it safe? That is but one point The Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act seeks to address.

Effluent ponds from the Northern Pulp Mill have been dumping into our precious waterway for many years and the damage is clearly evident.

Everyday I breathe it, see it, smell it and I am convinced we are drinking it.

Our once beautiful Boat Harbour is beyond recognition today.

Granted, efforts to restore Boat Harbour are under way, but it will be many years before this project is fully realized.

Until then, I can't help but fear the high rates of bronchial and allergy problems and specific kinds of cancers we see here are a direct result of the pollution.

That is difficult to prove, of course, but concerns for our health and future generations is what keeps our community fighting.

Across Nova Scotia, Mi'kmaq, Black and Acadian communities have been subjugated to generations of the harmful effects of industrial pollution and toxic waste dumps. Africville, Lincolnville and Pictou Landing are just a few examples.

I know many readers will disagree, but without hesitation I say that the government needs to address the underlying issue of these problems, which is racism.

Why do I believe this?

Because the decision to locate these dumps and industries next to our communities was planned and intentional.

It was done without any regard for the health, safety and wellbeing of their residents.

Property value is also greatly affected. Some property is deemed useless wasteland.

To do nothing about this equates to maintaining the status quo.

Aboriginal people are entitled to the same life, liberty, security and equality as other Canadians under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Bill No. 111 (on environmental racism) seeks to have the government at least admit there is a problem here in Nova Scotia as an important first step.

But I think it is shameful that in 2016 we still need to define it for government and others and to fight for the same basic rights and freedoms other Canadians take for granted.

Michelle LeBrun is a resident of Pictou Landing First Nation and a student in the masters of social work program at Dalhousie University.

Direct Link: <http://thechronicleherald.ca/opinion/1344579-lebrun-health-and-safety-equality-for-first-nations-minorities>

Doctor gives First Nations child 'Greetings, Native Savages' sticker

Listuguj chief Scott Martin wants meeting with head of Campbellton hospital over alleged incidents of racism

By Colleen Kitts-Goguen, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 25, 2016 6:01 PM AT Last Updated: Feb 25, 2016 6:23 PM AT



A sticker like this one was given to a First Nations child at the Campbellton Regional Hospital recently. (Ha-Shilth-Sa newspaper, Nanaimo, B.C.)

A physician at the Campbellton Regional Hospital handed out a "Greetings, Native Savages" sticker to a Listuguj First Nations child recently, prompting an outcry within the Listuguj community.

"This is unacceptable, insensitive and was very upsetting," said Listuguj Chief Scott Martin in a letter sent to Gilles Lanteigne, president and CEO of the Vitalité Health Network.

"This level of insensitivity points to a dearth of cultural competency and cultural safety at your hospital," Martin said in the letter.

Martin wants to meet with Lanteigne over allegations of "disturbing stories of discrimination and unprofessional behaviour" on the part of staff at the Campbellton Regional Hospital.



Listuguj chief Scott Martin sent a letter alleging "racist attitudes" among some staff at the Campbellton Regional Hospital. (CBC)

Martin said there have been other situations that point to "racist attitudes" of some hospital staff, including an incident with a receptionist at the hospital who allegedly said she would not provide drugs to a band member who had come to the hospital for treatment.

"[She] made disparaging remarks by insinuating the individual would abuse these drugs.

'This is unacceptable.'- *Scott Martin, chief of the Listuguj First Nation*

This person had no drug convictions or addictions whatsoever."

The chief could not be reached for comment, but Paul Stanley, CEO of the band, said people are angry about these incidents.

He said the sticker is racist and insulting and should not have happened in 2016.

"I thought Canada was way past all this type of stuff, but apparently not," said Stanley.

"You would expect that when you have a multi-million dollar — billion dollar — organization such as this, they'd have a much better screening system operating there," he said.

Stanley said the situation is part of a bigger problem of systemic racism experienced by First Nations people.

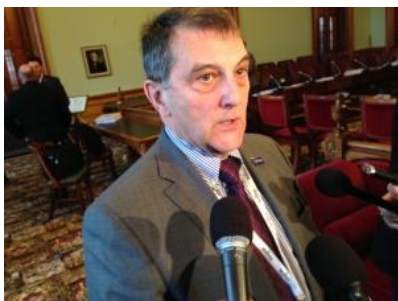
"They are treated in a disrespectful and racist manner and other practices within the hospital reinforce that point of view. It's not just about a sticker, it's not just about an apology. It's about what is it we can do to make this not appear again," Stanley said.

'We apologized'

Lanteigne said he received the letter from Chief Martin this week and has spoken to the chief on the phone.

In terms of the alleged incident with a hospital staff member making inappropriate remarks about drugs, Lanteigne said he has asked the chief to provide more information.

As for the sticker incident, Lanteigne said the stickers were ordered in bulk and are from a Dreamworks movie called *Home*. He said the doctor who handed out the sticker did not realize what was on it.



Vitalité CEO Gilles Lanteigne said he has spoken with Chief Martin and has agreed to set up a meeting. (CBC)

"The physician did call the mum, and the head nurse did call the mum twice, to explain that unfortunately we had bought these stickers without realizing what was really written on them and that it could be insulting," he said.

"We apologized, we call even called the company. We retrieved all these stickers from all our sites," Lanteigne said, pointing out these stickers have been given out, in error, in other parts of the country.

"Are these allegations founded and if they are well I committed we are going to do whatever it takes ... we just need a little bit more facts so we can look into the situation and take appropriate measures if they need to be taken."

Lanteigne said he looks forward to meeting with the chief, though no date has been set as yet.

When asked if he believes there is a problem with racism and discrimination at the Campbellton hospital, Lanteigne said he believes the situation at the hospital "is considerably improved."

"We do have staff from that community that work here ... We provide a lot of services to that community, so for us, it's important that every patient, every client that comes in this door is respected and gets the best possible services."

Paul Stanley said he believes there is a problem but he also believes there's a solution.

"A lot of those solutions are tied up in better communications," he said.

"We have an anti-racist group that can do educational outreach ... it's about conversations that are open and frank."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/listuguj-discrimination-campbellton-hospital-1.3463910>

Aboriginal History

Aboriginal History Month: essential, unknown

We have our own, unique history of racism to confront



By Jill Patterson on February 23, 2016

February is Black History Month. During February we reflect on the historical treatment of black people, who were taken from their homeland and carted across the Atlantic and, for those who survived the voyage, sold into slavery. That was just the beginning of the ill treatment of black people in North America, which continued well past the abolition of slavery and is still very much present today.

During Black History Month, we are encouraged to read books and watch movies that teach about the struggles that black people faced, and to reflect on and celebrate the accomplishments they have fought hard to achieve, such as the right to vote, access to education, and the desegregation of public spaces.

Black History Month is not just a U.S. observance; Canada also marks it with events, TV series, and radio broadcasts. Black History Month has also become the focus of marketing strategies for some businesses. One only needs to turn on the TV or walk by a bookstore to be greeted with a black history-themed advertisement.

Although there is a whole month dedicated to celebrating the achievements of black people and bringing awareness to their struggles throughout history, there is a definite lack of attention to the current struggles they face. While black people have made great strides in gaining basic rights and liberties we should not forget the long road ahead for full and complete equality.

In Canada, we celebrate Black History Month with, if perhaps not the same vigour as in the U.S., the same tenacity. Given the historical differences in how the U.S. treated black people compared with Canada's role in the slave trade, the U.S. should indeed be more inclined to acknowledge Black History Month than Canada. However, Canada has its own history that needs to be accounted for. Many Canadians would be surprised to know that, in Canada, we observe National Aboriginal History Month in June, as well as Asian Heritage Month in May and Women's History Month in October.

Since Canada has a long history of ill treatment of Aboriginal people, it is only fitting that we acknowledge the historical struggles of Aboriginal people in Canada in addition to their current struggles. However, the promotion and awareness of Aboriginal History

Month in Canada is severely lacking, paling in comparison to that of Black History Month. Even when we are not celebrating Black History Month, there is more emphasis placed on black history than there is on Aboriginal history.

In elementary and high schools, youth in Canada read about Harriet Tubman, watch the *Roots* series, and learn about Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. When I was in high school (admittedly, some years ago) we did not read about or discuss residential schools, attacks on indigenous tribes, or the cultural genocide of Aboriginal people in general.

I left high school with a very vague notion of who Louis Riel was, the extent of which was that he was a historical figure in Manitoba. Who he was or what he did, I could not say. The furthest we ever got to discussing indigenous and settler relations in school was the fur trade, which had a decidedly optimistic slant to it – something along the lines of “the settlers and Aboriginal people helped each other survive by trading furs and moccasins for spices and muskets.”

Perhaps things have changed since I was in school, and I hope that they have because that might signal a shift in the way Canadians understand our historical relations with Aboriginal people and how that shapes the many issues they face today. However, it still seems as though Canadians are more willing to accept the fact that black people have been ill-treated in the U.S. than acknowledge our own treatment of Aboriginal people. A good start would be to promote and truly celebrate Aboriginal History Month, the way that the both the US and Canada have embraced Black History Month.

Direct Link: <http://www.themanitoban.com/2016/02/aboriginal-history-month-essential-unknown/27273/>

Wheat City celebrates and honours Louis Riel

Westman Journal / Westman Journal
February 23, 2016 02:43 PM

Louis Riel, considered the founding father of the province of Manitoba, was celebrated and honoured all across Manitoba, as well as Brandon, during the long weekend.

On Monday, Feb. 15, festivities took place at the East End Community Centre in the Wheat City as hundreds of people took in the free event, which was hosted by Grand Valley Local and the Manitoba Metis Federation Southwest Region. Activities such as tobogganing, face painting and skating kept people busy throughout the afternoon outside, while local band Nite Life performed on stage inside. Hot dogs and hot chocolate were also served to the public who attended.

“Lots of people were listening to the music and dancing and having a great time,” said Dennis Bercier, Grand Valley Local chair.

There were also Metis artifacts and information about Riel made available to those looking to find out more about the former political leader of the Metis people and the Canadian prairies in the 1800s.

“He was the leader at that time and contributed significantly to Manitoba becoming a province,” Bercier said.

Other Louis Riel related events in the province included a three-day affair at Riding Mountain National Park. The events kicked off on Friday with a free concert by The Middle Coast at the Elkhorn Resort and continued on into Saturday with a birding presentation, pony rides and a Metis beading demonstration. The festivities wrapped up on Sunday with an afternoon of bannock roasting.

Meanwhile, in Winnipeg at the annual Festival du Voyageur, a mural portrait of Riel was unveiled and was created from more than 250 submitted photographs of Manitobans. A mix of dark and light photos formed the recognizable face of Riel. The mural portrait stayed in place until the conclusion of the Festival, which wrapped up Feb. 21.

- See more at: <http://www.westmanjournal.com/news/local-news/wheat-city-celebrates-and-honours-louis-riel-1.2182257#sthash.p6LRuUh5.dpuf>

Saskatoon Blues in the Schools offers a lesson in First Nations history

By [Ryan Kessler](#) Reporter Global News

February 23, 2016 4:01 pm

Updated: February 24, 2016 4:43 am



SASKATOON – A Juno Award-winning blues musician is hoping his performances at Saskatoon schools introduce people to a rarely acknowledged aspect of music. Murray Porter is a Mohawk piano player from the Grand River Territory in southern Ontario.

He's also one of the presenters of Blues in the Schools, a week-long program during the Saskatoon Blues Festival. The series uses music to educate students on topics like racism, classism and history.

The Mississippi Delta is often considered the birthplace of the blues. The songs of slaves later inspired rock n' roll and other forms of popular music.

"The natives and the African American people, we all have a shared stake in this," Porter said.

As black slaves escaped persecution via the Underground Railroad, they would often encounter Native Americans, and later, indigenous Canadians, according to Porter's manager Elaine Bomberry, who is also First Nations.

"They went to our camps and to our villages and to our fires, and they were adopted in and there was a real cross-cultural exchange that happened between our two peoples," Bomberry said.

Slaves often had their instruments taken away by their oppressors, Bomberry added. First Nations people would share their drums and they'd create music together.

On Tuesday, Porter and Bomberry presented in front of an auditorium of students at Tommy Douglas Collegiate. Porter's nephew Michael Skye is a Grade 12 Tommy Douglas student.

"It just kind of touched the heart, how native people, they really take in the blues and stuff. It's amazing," said Skye, a guitarist who often has jam sessions with his uncle.

Another artist, Tim Williams, will present at Saskatoon schools throughout the week.

Williams and Porter are scheduled to perform a sold-out show Tuesday night at Village Guitar & Amp Co.

The Saskatoon Blues Festival continues throughout the week, with a windup party Sunday afternoon at Vangelis Tavern.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/2536146/saskatoon-blues-in-the-schools-offers-a-lesson-in-first-nations-history/>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

Inuit experts hope to bridge gap between 9 unique 'alphabets'



A woman walks past a stop sign displayed in both English and Inuktitut in Iqaluit, Nunavut on March 28, 2009. (Nathan Denette / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

Bob Weber, The Canadian Press
Published Thursday, February 18, 2016 5:43PM EST

Two Inuit go hunting. One hands the other his rifle and the recipient says "ma'na."

His partner, though, has no idea what he's just heard. The word for thanks in his dialect is "qujannamiik."

There are only 60,000 Inuit in Canada, but they are divided between nine different writing forms and at least that many dialects. On Friday, language experts are to meet in Ottawa to help bridge that gulf.

"People can generally understand each other, but there are serious limitations for that understanding," said Natan Obed, head of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Canada's national Inuit group.

"If we had one unified writing system, we could maximize the ability for us to read in our language and also educate our children and provide them with learning resources."

Inuktitut fractured because it was spoken by widely dispersed groups who rarely interacted. The language splintered further when missionaries developed writing for it.

Syllabics, originally based on characters from Pitman shorthand, are most common in the Eastern Arctic. Roman orthography, the letters of the alphabet most of us recognize, is mostly used in the west.

The dialects have diverged so widely that some use sounds that speakers from other parts of the North can't even pronounce. Obed's group produces a magazine called Inuktitut that native speakers in the far west and the far east just can't read.

The drive to establish a standard writing form dates back to a recommendation in a 2011 report on Inuit education. Last September, experts from the four major Inuit regions began that task and continue their work on Friday.

Controversy is expected.

Many argue orthography is the way to go. It's in common use everywhere -- especially on social media and the Internet, both widely used by Inuit.

Last week, Inuktitut interpreters and translators voted at a conference in Iqaluit in favour of moving to orthography.

But many don't want to say goodbye to the triangles, circles and squiggles of syllabics. The debate gets more heated because the areas where Inuktitut is strongest -- almost all Quebec Inuit say they're fluent -- are the same areas that use syllabics.

"There are more Inuit talking seriously about transitioning out of syllabics into orthography," Obed said. "(But) it is very contentious because it gets to the heart of who people are and how they've learned and express themselves.

"People have equated linguistic preservation and use to syllabics," Obed said. "Syllabics attachment is based on the overarching history and the fact that syllabics allowed people to retain their language and their culture at a time of colonization and great upheaval."

There is no central language authority across all four Inuit regions. Implementing any recommendations from the standardization report will be up to the regional land-claim groups.

Coming together would have economic and cultural benefits, said Obed. It would draw Inuit together and make developing curriculum materials for schools easier and cheaper.

"The Roman orthography side says, 'Look at the practicality of what orthography could do to unlock the learning potential, to reduce costs, to ensure in this digital age that we don't have to get through another set of barriers to express ourselves.'"

The experts meeting this weekend have until early next year to complete their work.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/inuit-experts-hope-to-bridge-gap-between-9-unique-alphabets-1.2783831>

First Nations organizations says community centre incident in Winnipeg reflects still-present racism

IAN GRAHAM / THOMPSON CITIZEN
FEBRUARY 19, 2016 12:00 AM

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) are speaking out about an incident in which a 14-year-old boy was the target of a racial epithet in a Winnipeg community centre.

The boy, whose family is from Garden Hill First Nation, was told to get off the Champlain Community Centre grounds by a worker who swore and called him a stupid Indian, according to an interview the boy's mother Jane Harper did with CBC news.

The worker has since been fired.

"The citizens of our MKO First Nations use Winnipeg's community centres on a daily basis and the law requires that the centres must provide an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment," MKO Grand Chief Sheila North Wilson said in a joint MKO-AMC press release Feb. 16. "MKO is calling on Mayor [Brian] Bowman and the Indigenous Advisory Circle and the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (GCWCC) to immediately take action to reinforce the city's compliance with anti-discrimination laws and with the city's community centre respectful environment policy."

"MKO is also calling on the Indigenous Advisory Circle to collaborate with the GCWCC and community centres to immediately launch regular indigenous inclusion programs for community centre staff and for everyone who uses the community centres that are compliant with standards of cultural competency and cultural safety. MKO is also asking Mayor Bowman to include a representative from an MKO First Nation on the Indigenous Advisory Circle to help contribute a northern perspective to the work of the council," added North Wilson.

"It seems that the employees of the city's community centres need a fast and earnest lesson on the effects of racism and discrimination" said AMC Grand Chief Derek Nepinak. "It's going to be on the ground in the streets of the city where positive changes to the racism faced daily by Indigenous peoples is going to have to be measured."

Winnipeg was characterized as Canada's most racist city in a Maclean's magazine article in January 2015.

The boy's family is considering legal options to address the incident, including criminal charges or a human rights complaint as well as asking for a protection order or peace bond via the court system.

See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/first-nations-organizations-says-community-centre-incident-in-winnipeg-reflects-still-present-racism-1.2177021#sthash.z5tq9M1Y.dpuf>

Aboriginal Inequality & Poverty

Cree Nation fishers cut off EI

By: [Mia Rabson](#)

Posted: 02/19/2016 3:00 AM |

OTTAWA — Fishers from Norway House Cree Nation say Ottawa has accused them of wrongly claiming employment insurance benefits for themselves and their helpers, even though the government has been approving those claims for more than a decade.

About 50 fishers and 100 helpers are affected by what some say is an overly aggressive investigation that has cut off EI benefits for dozens of them.

"There's something wrong here," said Langford Saunders, president of the Norway House fishers co-operative.

He said last August federal officials signalled an intention to begin investigating EI claims from the fishers and their helpers. Interviews began the following month.

A number of them were told earlier this month they will no longer be eligible for EI, and Saunders said some fishers have been told they need to repay between \$5,000 and \$30,000 for benefits previously received.

He said the issue seems to be EI officials are suddenly saying the way fishers designated working hours to their helpers was incorrect and none of them should have qualified for EI by those claims.

But he said he has been making the claims the same way for 13 years, he and his helpers always qualified and no one has ever said it was a problem before now.

"Somebody approved it," he said.

The investigators also accused some of the helpers of lying, he said.

NDP MP Niki Ashton, her party's employment critic and the MP representing the fishers, asked about the issue in the House of Commons Thursday, saying the fishers "are being treated like criminals for receiving EI."

"They are being interrogated, intimidated, and even being told to hand over the records of people who have died," she said. "People are being cut off from their benefits without even having the chance to plead their case. We are talking about some of the poorest people in Canada. Will the government work with Norway House fishers to resolve this situation immediately?"

Employment Minister and Manitoba Liberal MP MaryAnn Mihychuk said, "This is a very sensitive case.

"Individuals are going through an investigation. It is ongoing, and I cannot comment."

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/cree-nation-fishers-cut-off-ei-369388521.html>

'It's the same story': How Australia and Canada are twinning on bad outcomes for Indigenous people

The statistics are almost identical because 'English settler colonialism works the same way' in different places, says Canadian expert on trip to Sydney

Wednesday 24 February 2016 20.00 GMT Last modified on Wednesday 24 February 2016 21.44 GMT

Aboriginal disadvantage in [Canada](#) mirrors that of Indigenous people in Australia because both are survivors of colonialism, a leading Canadian advocate has said.

Aboriginal peoples in Canada were grappling with record numbers of their children being placed in the child welfare system and a huge over-representation in the criminal justice system – the same issues that faced Australia, said Jonathan Rudin, head of Aboriginal Legal Services of Canada.

Indigenous affairs minister says push by Close the Gap committee is 'foolish' because federal government had no control over incarceration rates
[Read more](#)

"It's the same story," he said at a Legal Aid Victoria event in Melbourne on Tuesday. "And the reason it's the same story is English settler colonialism works the same way, which is that you find a place with an indigenous population and then you destroy them as a people."

The statistics were almost identical. Aboriginal peoples make up 4% of the Canadian population and 25% of its prison population. In Australia, the 3% of the population who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders make up 27% of those in prison.

Aboriginal women make up a third of the female prison population in both countries. The only significant difference in incarceration rate is among juvenile detainees, where Australia is markedly worse: 59% of all children in detention in Australia are Indigenous, compared with 40% of children in Canadian youth jails.

In the child welfare system, which Rudin said was the most significant concern for most Aboriginal peoples, almost 50% of children were Aboriginal. The Australian rate is 51%.

“If it’s something people want, Aboriginal people have less of it, and if it’s something people don’t want Aboriginal people have more,” he said.

In both countries, Rudin said, the trauma of colonisation was compounded by a government policy of taking children away. Australia’s stolen generation saw an estimated 10,500 children forcibly removed and placed on missions to be trained as domestic servants between the late 1800s and the 1970s. In roughly the same period (though the last school did not close until 1996) roughly 150,000 Canadian Aboriginal children were placed in residential schools.

“There are actually more Aboriginal children in the care of the state today numerically than there were at any one time in the residential schools,” he said.

“Now we don’t have residential schools. What we have is child welfare, and when you graduate from child welfare we have jails.”

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The difference, he said, has been in the legal response. In 1999, the Canadian supreme court ruled in a case known as in [R v Gladue](#) that the courts had “failed” Aboriginal peoples and required “the circumstances of Aboriginal offenders” be paid particular attention in sentencing. Rudin said that decision was used to found Aboriginal-run Gladue courts and a system of Gladue reports, a pre-sentencing report that details family and personal history. The process could be painful (“We have had two clients who while we were writing the report killed themselves,” he said) but it allowed the judge to properly take account of their circumstances.

“The crisis is not that Aboriginal people commit crime,” he said. “The crisis is that the response to Aboriginal people who commit crime is jail. And that is not the fault of Aboriginal people.

“Our Gladue reports have made a huge different to how people are sentenced ... and it all changes because the person becomes a person.”

Effective solutions, he said, were those that were led by Aboriginal communities. “It’s the non-Aboriginal community recognising that the Aboriginal community has the capacity, and the skills, and the knowledge, to do that work, and that builds the capacity of the Aboriginal community,” he said.

In a subsequent interview with Guardian Australia, Rudin said that formal federal targets to reduce Aboriginal imprisonment could work if they were applied like any other justice targets, such as targets around diverting people to drug courts.

Talks with indigenous communities before an inquiry into the missing and murdered women suggest figure is much higher than police estimate of 1,200
Read more

The Canadian prime minister, Justin Trudeau, has asked the [justice minister, Jody Wilson-Raybould](#), to try to reduce the rate of Aboriginal incarceration. In Australia, Malcolm Turnbull pointed to the high incarceration rate in his February update on closing the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, but the Indigenous affairs minister, Nigel Scullion, [has said the government won't set national justice targets](#).

“The attorney general and the justice department should report on these things and they should be told that we’re going to evaluate you based on how this goes,” Scullion said. “And I know that some crown attorneys, prosecutors [will say] that’s not good because really we have to just pursue justice wherever justice goes, but governments, set all sorts of targets for courts and that would be a perfectly legitimate target.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/25/indigenous-australians-and-canadians-destroyed-by-same-colonialism>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Indigenous women with post-secondary degrees out-earn other women: study

GLORIA GALLOWAY

OTTAWA — The Globe and Mail

Published Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016 10:16AM EST

Last updated Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016 12:42PM EST

First Nations, Métis and Inuit women are less likely to have postsecondary degrees than other Canadian women, but those aboriginal women who do obtain a degree or diploma after high school earn, on average, slightly more than their non-aboriginal counterparts, according to a new study from Statistics Canada.

The study released Tuesday morning, which uses information obtained from the 2011 National Household Survey, emphasizes the critical role that education can play in lifting this country's indigenous people out of poverty.

It was made public on the same day First Nations leaders are meeting in Ottawa to discuss ways to move ahead with on-reserve educational reforms after failed efforts by the previous government to improve school outcomes.

The survey looked at the educational and economic status of Canada's indigenous women, including Métis and Inuit and First Nations, living both on and off reserve.

It found that, four years ago, aboriginal women, who made up about four per cent of Canada's female population, were less likely to have postsecondary qualifications than non-aboriginal women. About half of all aboriginal women aged 25 to 64 had a degree, diploma or certificate, compared with 65 per cent of their non-aboriginal counterparts. Métis and First Nations women were, on average, better educated than Inuit women.

And less educated aboriginal women were less likely to be part of the paid work force than non-aboriginal women in similar situations.

While 46.6 per cent of non-aboriginal women who did not have a high-school diploma or some other type of certification had jobs, among aboriginal women that employment rate dropped to 35.5 per cent. That gap narrowed for those who had that high-school education.

But, in general, those aboriginal women who had attained university degrees were doing very well.

The rate of employment among First Nations, Métis and Inuit women who had at least a bachelor's degree was 81.8 per cent, compared with 79.5 per cent for their non-aboriginal counterparts.

The survey also demonstrated the power of higher education to increase economic outcomes among indigenous people.

While the the median income for aboriginal women aged 25 to 64 who had no certificate, diploma or degree was \$15,208, that rose to \$49,947 for those who had a bachelor's degree or above. And aboriginal women with a university certificate, diploma or degree actually earned slightly more than non-aboriginal women with the same level of education.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/indigenous-women-thrive-with-postsecondary-education/article28847754/>

Aboriginal Politics

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples excluded from March meeting with Prime Minister

National News | February 18, 2016 by Jorge Barrera |



Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP), which represents off-reserve and non-status Indigenous peoples, was not invited to next month's planned Vancouver meeting between Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Indigenous leaders.

The Congress was excluded because the March 2 meeting with the prime minister is meant for organizations representing "title holders," meaning those with Aboriginal rights under section 35 of the Constitution, *APTN National News* has learned.

The Prime Minister's Office has asked the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Metis National Council to send a delegation of 10 representatives each to the meeting which will focus on discussions around combating climate change.

The meeting with Indigenous leaders will be followed by a meeting between the prime minister and premiers the next day.

The PMO confirmed in a statement that CAP was not invited to the March meeting. The PMO said the AFN, ITK and the Metis Council were meeting with the prime minister "in the context of a renewed nation-to-nation relationship."

The PMO said the March meeting does not "in any way preclude ongoing discussions" with all national Indigenous organizations.

“The government of Canada has committed to working and meeting regularly with the national Aboriginal organizations and will continue to engage in robust bilateral discussions,” said the PMO statement.

Despite repeated requests, CAP did not provide any comment.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/18/congress-of-aboriginal-peoples-excluded-from-march-meeting-with-prime-minister/>

First Nations MLA Melanie Mark steps up at a time of 'complex' aboriginal relations

B.C. government making inroads on some fronts with First Nations, but still battling in the courts

By Richard Zussman, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 20, 2016 6:00 AM PT Last Updated: Feb 20, 2016 6:00 AM PT



Melanie Mark, MLA elect for Vancouver-Mt Pleasant, speaks with media after becoming the first First Nations woman to serve in the legislature. (Chad Hipolito/Canadian Press)

It was a step that no other First Nations woman has ever taken.

This week Melanie Mark walked onto the red carpet of the B.C. Legislature to take her seat as an elected representative complete with ceremonial dress and music, and not without a few tears.

The new [NDP MLA for Vancouver-Mount Pleasant](#) says she already feels loaded with great expectations.

"I am feeling like this is a very powerful step forward for justice in our history. There is a lot strength behind me," Mark said. "It's really a testament to where British Columbians want to go and that is really about reconciliation."

But it's clearly going to be a lonely and difficult road. Just a handful of government MLAs bothered showing up to her swearing in ceremony even while the entire NDP caucus watched.

It was a strange message from a government that seems keen to build better relationships with British Columbia's First Nation leaders.



Melanie Mark is escorted in by B.C. NDP leader, John Horgan, during a swearing in ceremony at the legislature as members of the Nisga'a First Nations play their drums. (Chad Hipolito/Canadian Press)

'Complex' relationship

University of North British Columbia First Nations historian Ted Binnema describes the relationship between First Nations and the province as 'complex'.

He says the size of the aboriginal population in the province is growing faster than non-aboriginal and that the Christy Clark government has been attempting some sort of reconciliation for the way generations of First Nations people have been treated in the province.

"There are signs of positive developments in the relationship between aboriginal British Columbians and non-aboriginal British Columbians," says Binnema. "I get a sense that many British Columbians understand the need for reconciliation."

The majority of that success has been in the progress on land claims. But Binnema says the government's attempts to develop resources in the coastal and northern parts of the province have put a strain on relationships.

"The government has not been particularly good understanding what meaningful consultation means in resource development," Binnema says. "But it has sent some positive signals more recently. It is a learning curve certainly."



Premier Christy Clark, right, greets Chief Michael LeBourdais, of the Whispering Pines-Clinton Indian Band in the Shuswap First Nation near Kamloops, B.C., after addressing a gathering of First Nations leaders and B.C. cabinet ministers in Vancouver. (Darryl Dick/The Canadian Press)

First Nations split on relations with government

Clark has been successful in bringing First Nation leaders to larger gatherings twice, with a third meeting set for next week. Among that group Clark has her supporters and she has adversaries.

The Grand Chief of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs Stewart Phillip has never shied away from **his disdain for the current government**.

"Absolutely dismal, at the lowest end imaginable. This government does not have any credible aboriginal policies," says Phillip, when describing how he thinks Clark's government is doing with his community.

"There is an enormous growing tension within our communities and more and more First Nations communities are filing lawsuits against the government as a consequence of failed policies."

Phillip also points at resource development as a government failing. Many of those court proceedings include injunctions brought by First Nations seeking to stop development on their land.

Both the Pacific Northwest LNG plant and Site C are being fought through the legal system. The federal government itself has initiated some changes, including the National Energy Board review process, that would see more First Nations consultation.

"To a certain extent the Trudeau government's initiatives have overshadowed the provincial government. The day is very early for this [Trudeau] government. It has yet to run into some of these obstacles and challenges," Binnema says.

"The current (Liberal) government of B.C. has a long record either positive or negative. The Trudeau government does not have the burden of a long record."



Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, right, president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, and British Columbia Premier Christy Clark listen during the first ever gathering with cabinet ministers and First Nations leaders in Vancouver, on September 11, 2014. (Darryl Dick/The Canadian Press)

An emerging influence

Mark knows that as one voice in opposition she has very little power to make policy changes. But Phillip says there is hope her arrival will symbolize long-term change.

"We are absolutely cognizant that Melanie Mark represents the emerging face of women assuming leadership roles in government," says Philip.

"I don't think the question is how well will she do in opposition. The question is, what role will she play when the NDP wins the next election."

That may be less of a prediction and more the opinion of a chief who has already made up his mind. But whatever the long-term impact Mark might have on the province, certainly she has changed something by just walking into the legislature.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/mla-melanie-mark-first-nations-1.3456605>

Premiers want all national aboriginal groups at first ministers' talks: Selinger

Kristy Kirkup

OTTAWA — The Canadian Press

Published Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016 4:49PM EST

Last updated Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2016 4:49PM EST

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is under pressure from the premiers to ensure that the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples and the Native Women's Association of Canada are included in discussions next week ahead of the first ministers' meeting in Vancouver.

Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger said the premiers had a brief discussion and believe all five national aboriginal organizations should attend.

Selinger's comments come after the two excluded groups sent a strongly worded letter of complaint to the premiers.

"We've had that tradition in the past when they meet with the Council of the Federation," Selinger said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

"We meet with all five organizations and we're supportive of continuing that practice."

The premiers don't see any reason why the groups cannot attend, Selinger added.

"There is some good leadership there," he said. "We just want them to be heard and part of the process."

The letter to the premiers, obtained by The Canadian Press, expresses surprise and "great disappointment" at the lack of an invitation from Trudeau.

It also calls on the premiers to hold Trudeau accountable to his promise of inclusion.

"At a meeting held on Dec. 16, 2015, the prime minister reiterated the federal government's commitment to include all five (national aboriginal organizations) in high-level discussions pertaining to indigenous issues," it reads.

"It is extremely important that all indigenous voices are heard and not just a select few."

Dwight Dorey, the national chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, which represents about 1.1 million indigenous people living off-reserve, said Tuesday the government's decision does not make sense to him.

"In talking to some of the premiers, they're ... shocked at it," Dorey said.

"It is clearly discrimination. It goes totally against the commitment that the prime minister made."

Dorey said he's seeking the support of the premiers in the hope it will convince Trudeau to invite both the congress and the women's association.

In a statement, the Prime Minister's Office said Trudeau would meet the premiers, the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and the Metis National Council ahead of the first ministers meeting "in the context of a renewed nation-to-nation relationship."

The meetings do not in any way preclude ongoing discussions with all five national aboriginal organizations, as committed to by the prime minister late last year, the statement said.

"The government of Canada has committed to working and meeting regularly with the national aboriginal organizations and will continue to engage in robust bilateral discussions with all five ... on issues of importance to their members," said spokesperson Andree-Lyne Halle.

Halle did not explain why the congress and the association were excluded.

NDP indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus said he is still trying to figure out what the government is trying to accomplish by leaving out the two groups.

"Mr. Trudeau said he was going to end Stephen Harper's standard operating practice of picking winners and losers and creating confrontation by excluding people he didn't want to hear from," Angus said.

"The message they're sending is, 'There are going to be winners and losers with this new government'."

With files from Chinta Puxley

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/premiers-want-all-national-aboriginal-groups-at-first-ministers-talks-selinger/article28856027/>

Bennett stands by promise to remove 2-per-cent funding cap for on-reserve programs

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett says the Liberal government remains committed to removing a 2-per-cent cap on funding increases for First Nations programming in its first federal budget.



Terry Goodtrack, president and CEO of AFOA Canada, a non-profit organization representing financial officers working in aboriginal communities, said Monday, "The cap (on funding increases) doesn't keep up with our demographic realities and cost of programs."

By: [Joanna Smith](#) Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Mon Feb 22 2016

OTTAWA—Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett says the Liberal government remains committed to lifting an unpopular 2-per-cent cap on funding increases for First Nations programming and services in its first federal budget.

"I am committed to that," Bennett said in a recent interview when asked whether removing the cap — as promised in the campaign platform — was still in the cards for the March 22 federal budget.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau promised a renewed relationship with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada, but much of the focus in recent weeks has been on the upcoming national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

The promise that could end up having a bigger impact on daily lives, however, would be getting rid of the indigenous affairs department's [2-per-cent cap on funding increases](#) for on-reserve programs and services, which would affect things like education, safe drinking water, housing and likely many of the recommendations that one could expect to come out of the national inquiry.

The cap, which was put in place by the Liberal government of former prime minister Jean Chrétien in 1996, has played not kept pace with the growth in First Nations population.

That is why Terry Goodtrack, president and chief executive officer of AFOA Canada, a non-profit organization representing financial officers working in aboriginal communities, asked [Finance Minister Bill Morneau](#) about it at a pre-budget town hall in Ottawa Monday morning.

"The cap doesn't keep up with our demographic realities and cost of programs," said Goodtrack said in an interview about the budgetary pressures faced by First Nations administrations.

[Trudeau was unequivocal](#) when he told a gathering of the Assembly of First Nations in December that the promise would be fulfilled in the 2016 federal budget, but Morneau stopped short of confirming it in response to Goodtrack, saying he was not yet ready to release those details.

“I can say that this is an enormously high priority for this government to renew and refresh our relationship with indigenous Canadians and bring a really important group of Canadians into an economic situation that’s much, much better,” Morneau said.

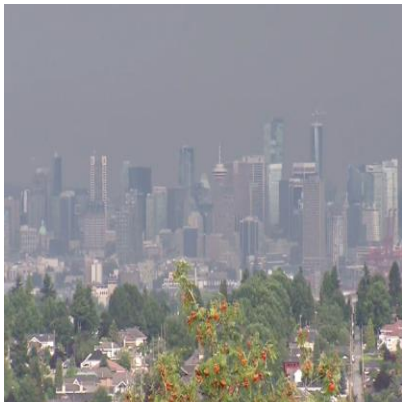
Assembly of First Nations National Chief Perry Bellegarde expressed optimism that Morneau did not intend to leave any room for doubt.

“Lifting the cap is a necessary part of closing the gap in the quality of life between First Nations and Canada,” he said in an emailed statement Monday.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/02/22/budget-to-remove-2-per-cent-funding-cap-for-on-reserve-programs-says-carolyn-bennett.html>

Chiefs concerned over length of planned meeting with PM, want in on talks with premiers

National News | February 25, 2016 by [Jorge Barrera](#) | [1 Comment](#)



(Vancouver skyline. APTN/file)

Jorge Barrera

APTN National News

Some First Nations leaders expressed concern Wednesday a planned Vancouver meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau next week is scheduled to run only two hours.

Trudeau is scheduled to meet with First Nation, Inuit and Metis leaders in Vancouver on March 2 to discuss climate change. The prime minister is meeting with premiers the next day.

Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Ontario regional Chief Isadore Day said two hours is not enough to discuss climate change with the prime minister and he would like to see First Nation leaders also sit at the table with the premiers the next day.

“Clearly two hours is not enough, we are definitely pushing for full inclusion,” said Day.

Day said the office of AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde's office is currently trying to convince the PMO to expand the current parameters of First Nation involvement in next week's climate change talks with Trudeau.

The Ontario regional chief said First Nations need to be directly involved in any discussions involving Ottawa and the provinces on climate change plans.

"We need to be fully engaged and in some of those cases we need to be leading some of those processes and discussions," said Day. "We can't take this position lightly."

Currently, the March 2 meeting is tentatively scheduled to run from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. The AFN, the Metis National Council and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatam (ITK) are expected to attend with 10 delegates each.

The AFN is planning on holding preparatory meetings next Monday and Tuesday in Vancouver to allow the AFN delegation to hone its message and issues it wants to present during the meeting with Trudeau.

AFN Alberta regional Chief Craig Makinaw said he's received no firm details on what's planned for the meeting, but expressed concern a two hour meeting is just not enough time with the prime minister.

"I have been at previous meetings and two hours is never enough time to bring all the issues out," said Makinaw. "You will get rushed and you don't get enough time to bring your concerns out. That is the frustration I have when there are always two hour meetings."

Metis National Council President Clement Chartier said he had no concern with the Trudeau meeting running only two hours.

"They are usually not overly long," said Chartier. "Certainly being there is sufficient as a start."

Chartier said the Metis National Council needs Ottawa to help improve its capacity to deal with issues like climate change.

"The Metis National Council doesn't have the capacity to deal on all these issues that are cropping up," he said.

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (CAP) has also tried to create a minor controversy over its exclusion from the meeting. CAP and the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) have written to the premiers asking to be allowed to participate in the meetings.

Chartier said CAP should not be part of nation-to-nation talks with Ottawa.

"They are not invited because they do not represent nations or any governments," said Chartier.

Day said he didn't want to comment directly on CAP or NWAC. He said the Ontario delegation traveling to Vancouver includes three women.

ITK representatives were not available to comment.

Prime Minister's Office did not respond to repeated request for comments.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/02/25/chiefs-concerned-over-length-of-planned-meeting-with-pm-want-in-on-talks-with-premiers/>

Aboriginal Sports

Nunavik athlete rallies from loss ahead of Arctic Winter Games

"All that grieving led to alcoholism. My family was drinking a lot"

STEVE DUCHARME, February 19, 2016 - 8:29 am



Deseray Cumberbatch, right, gets a hug from her brother and fellow athlete Jamesie Cumberbatch March 20, 2014, after she kicked her personal best in the One Foot High Kick event in Fairbanks, Alaska. (TEAM NUNAVIK PHOTO)

When veteran Team Nunavik-Québec athlete Deseray Cumberbatch steps off the airplane in Nuuk, Greenland for the 2016 Arctic Winter Games, the first thing she wants to do is climb a mountain and take in the scenery.

And it won't end there.

Not stopping will be the Inukjuak resident's mantra during her sixth Arctic Winter Games appearance.

"I want to go up that mountain. I want to go to that house. I want to go shop. I want to experience the real Greenlandic environment," Cumberbatch said from her home in Montreal, where she is a student in Community, Recreation and Leadership Training at Dawson College.

With 25 medals, earned over a decade of competition in Inuit Games, Cumberbatch stands confident on a mountain of her own making.

Inuit Games are an umbrella category encompassing several traditional Inuit feats, such as the one and two-foot high kick, kneel and sledge jumps, and the arm pull, among several others.

Cumberbatch says she will be competing in every category that she's eligible to enter

And, at 24 years old, she is likely to add to her medal-haul by the end of the games.

But, beyond exploring Greenland, Nuuk's Arctic Winter Games will provide the stage for Cumberbatch to conquer another obstacle.

It's one that's dogged her for more than two years and that cast a dark shadow over her performance at the 2014 games in Fairbanks, Alaska.

"First [I lost] my aunt, she passed away from a stroke," Cumberbatch said, reflecting on the months before her arrival in Fairbanks two years ago.

Less than a day later, her grandmother died of cancer. Her grandfather's death followed shortly afterwards.

Two weeks after that, a friend of the family died by suicide in Cumberbatch's home.

"I was having a bad year. Mentally I wasn't ready and physically I was practicing but I didn't really have the dedication to keep on track," she said.

The shock of loss sent her Inukjuak family into a downward spiral.

"All that grieving led to alcoholism. My family was drinking a lot. And, since I don't drink, it was really hard to take care of them," she said.

Despite the distractions, Cumberbatch earned three bronze medals — or ulus — in Alaska while also delivering a personal best in the women's one-foot high kick at 2.24 metres.

But, like any good competitor, Cumberbatch isn't satisfied with past accomplishments.

The 2016 games will be her redemption, she promised — and she won't be alone in Nuuk when it's realized.

Her father and cousin will both accompany Cumberbatch to Greenland this March.

"It will be my father's very first time attending the Arctic Winter Games as a guest and I'm really excited," she said.

And her 13-year-old cousin represents the newest generation of her family participating in the games.

It's a symbolic revival for a family mired in its loss, and Cumberbatch is drawing from her new-found responsibilities.

"I'm excited for her. I know she looks up to me," she said.

Team Nunavik-Québec will also look to Cumberbatch's leadership during the games.

As a veteran on her team, she knows other athletes count on her for support.

"I feel the pressure but it's encouraging."

Her message to her teammates is a simple one.

"You meet a lot of people. You see old friends and make new ones. You get the best experience ever because we go there for games but we also go to have fun and to just experience and learn different cultures," said Cumberbatch, about what she'll tell the team.

"It's just going to be fun."

For her father, who was born and raised on the Caribbean island nation of St. Vincent, Cumberbatch's advice is even simpler.

"Just wear extra layers. I don't know how he's going to do in Greenland, but as long as he's with me it's good," she said.

The 2016 Arctic Winter Games take place March 6 to March 11 in Nuuk, Greenland, with a satellite hockey tournament scheduled for Iqaluit.

Stay tuned for more Team Nunavik-Québec and Team Nunavut athlete profiles in *Nunatsiaq News* ahead of the games.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavik_athlete_rallies_from_loss_ahead_of_awgs/

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

Baffinland proposes changing Mary River project's shipping road to a railway

Phase 2 environment impact statement postponed to September

By Elyse Skura, [CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 18, 2016 2:14 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 18, 2016 2:14 PM CT



The Qikiqtani Inuit Association's board of directors review Baffinland's latest letter to the Nunavut Impact Review Board and ask questions about the QIA's plans to inform the communities about this week's news. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

Baffinland Iron Mines is proposing another change to its Mary River project on north Baffin Island — this time a decision to build a railway — which will delay the submission of its phase 2 environmental impact statement by several months.

Oliver Curran, the company's director of sustainable development, sent a letter to the Nunavut Impact Review Board Wednesday outlining its decision to re-evaluate how it will transport ore from the mine site to Milne Inlet.

"By way of our alternatives assessment, Baffinland has determined the incorporation of a railway is an integral facet of the Phase 2 proposal due to a number of environmental, technical and economic benefits," Curran wrote.

The company did not explicitly say why it considers using rail a better transportation method than using trucks along the tow road.



Baffinland's Milne Inlet camp. The first load of iron ore was shipped out of Baffinland Iron Mines' Mary River site last year. The company has made several changes to its plans since it began the project, some of them controversial. (Baffinland)

Baffinland is currently going through the NIRB process for its phase 2 proposal, which includes a controversial plan to ship ore out of Milne Inlet for 10 months every year — a process which would mean breaking up ice near Pond Inlet.

QIA board reflects on changes

Justin Buller, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association's assistant director for major projects, and Enookie Inuarak, a member at large with the QIA executive, explained the letter at a public board of directors meeting in Iqaluit Thursday.

Baffinland had expected to file an environmental impact statement to the Nunavut Impact Review Board this April. Now, it doesn't expect to complete that document until September.

"After that there will be a period of comments and information requests that can go back and forth between the company and other stakeholders," said Buller.



Baffinland Iron Mines sent a letter to NIRB Wednesday saying it is re-evaluating how it will transport ore over land from the mine site to port. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

Then there will be technical meetings and public hearings, as part of the NIRB process, but Buller doesn't expect that will happen now until early 2017.

"I don't expect that we'll have much more information from the company until then, but you never know. They've changed the project many times before."

No changes to 10-month shipping proposal

Buller and Inuraq say this change does not reflect a change of heart from Baffinland regarding its plans for 10-month shipping.

In Inuktitut, Inuraq said Baffinland has not said when it will move forward with work on Mary River, as the company has "indicated that they are lacking financial resources."

It also appears that the company will still send ore south to Steensby Inlet, as well as north to Milne Inlet.

"Right now they're permitted to transport 18-million tonnes from Mary River to Steensby and they're permitted to move 4.2-million tonnes from Mary River to Milne. They're proposing to increase that amount from 4.2 to 12," he said.

"They haven't said that they're planning to move all of it North."

Buller says, while Baffinland hasn't explicitly stated this, it is also looking to expand the port to accommodate larger ships.

That way "they don't have to ship as many times and they don't have to use the trans-shipping method where one ship offloads its cargo to another ship," he said.

"It makes the project more efficient."



Enookie Inuarak, a member at large for the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, and Justin Buller, assistant director for QIA's department of major projects, explained Baffinland's most recent change to its Mary River project on Thursday. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

Inuit organization looks to communities

Last November, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association visited the five affected North Baffin communities to find out what local Inuit want to know about the project.

"Typically what we're trying to do ... is understand community concerns, potential impacts, worries, opinions, and pull that into a QIA position so that QIA can then advocate for beneficiaries."

Community directors expressed concerns about the many changes with the project and the potential effects of this latest development.

"Where do we draw the line?" Abraham Qammaniq, Hall Beach's community director, said in Inuktitut. "They're not thinking of the land. They're not thinking of the people."

Other board members wondered if there would now be fewer jobs available for local Inuit.

"There's a good chance that operating the railway would reduce the number of truck driver positions available for Inuit in the region," said Buller. "But, there's also the trade-off that people would be needed to build the railway."

President PJ Akeeagok said it was too early for the association to have an official opinion on this latest change.

The Qikiqtani Inuit Association is planning to create a public service announcement to explain the changes and hold more radio call-in shows to gauge opinions, before formulating a position.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/baffinland-new-change-railway-shipping-1.3453469>

Arctic festival to draw attention to food insecurity due to climate change

By **Levon Sevunts**, Radio Canada International | english@rcinet.ca

Thursday 18 February, 2016

A tiny northern community is throwing a party to try to draw national and international attention to the effects of climate change on food security for the Inuit people in the Canadian Arctic.

The Nunavut community of Igloolik is hosting a festival called *Kiss the Earth* to raise awareness and funds for vulnerable people facing hunger because of food insecurity caused by climate change.

The four-day event will feature a tundra clean up, musical performances by stars such as Kelly Fraser and the first "Green carpet" screening of *Theo and Chloe*, starring Igloolik elder Theo Ikummaq, Dakota Johnson and Mira Sorvino, and produced by Sir Richard Branson, said Dana Barker-Sheaves, one of the main organizers and an assistant manager at Igloolik Coop, an Inuit-run coop.

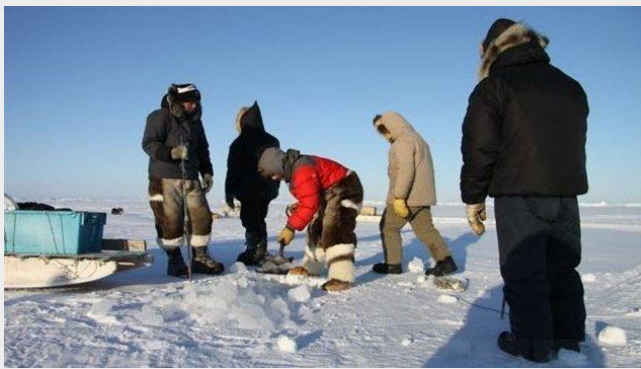
The rest of the world simply might not know how much global warming and climate change affect small, fly-in, remote communities like Igloolik, she said.

“We see food insecurity a lot in the Canadian Arctic,” Barker-Sheaves said speaking on the phone from Igloolik. “We see people who just don’t have enough to be able to provide for their families.”

Traditional hunting and fishing were always a big part of Inuit culture in the Canadian Arctic and with the ever-changing sea ice, and the melting of the sea ice that’s becoming a lot harder, depriving people of traditional sources of healthy and nutritious food, she said

Even with -40 degrees in Igloolik on Thursday, the floe-edge, the mass of sea ice that’s supposed to be the prime hunting ground, is a lot smaller this year, making hunting a lot more difficult, said Barker-Sheaves.

“Every day we see less and less what we call ‘country food’ available to our people,” Barker-Sheaves said. “And because we’re so remote, getting regular food here comes at a cost.”



Inuit hunters in Canada’s eastern Arctic territory of Nunavut. The hunters are setting up nets to hunt fish and seal.

The coop no longer can secure the caribou or seal meat as easily as it used to years ago, said Barker-Sheaves.

“The climate change is what causing people to be hungry,” Barker-Sheaves said. “It’s not the cost of bringing food to our community, it’s the climate change. We no longer provide what we always did because of melting sea ice.”

Graham Dickson, CEO Arctic Kingdom, an Iqaluit-based company that specializes in Arctic safaris, eco-expeditions and diving, and is one of the corporate sponsors of the event, said he has seen the effect of climate change first hand in the 17 years he’s been bringing tourists to the Arctic.

“Igloolik is a special place with huge expanses, it’s a little bit like the prairies if you will,” said Dickson. “There is lots of sea ice moving around the Fox Basin, and it’s

special because there are bowhead whales, there are huge groups of walrus, and it's one of the highest areas of polar bear concentration in the world.”

But climate change is disrupting this fragile ecosystem and the way of life that has developed around it, Dickson said.



An Inuit hunter stands watch over a seal breathing hole in the sea ice. © Levon Sevunts/Radio Canada International

Sometimes there is too much ice and some years not enough, making it difficult for Inuit hunters to access their traditional hunting and fishing areas or to guide groups of tourists to areas where they can experience the majestic fauna first-hand, Dickson said.

“We want the world to know that global warming is having an impact,” said Barker-Sheaves. “We may not see it down south the way we see it in the Arctic but every year the conditions are changing: the ice is changing, the wildlife and country food is changing... Eventually, it's going to move past just the Arctic.”

Direct Link: <http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2016/02/18/arctic-festival-to-draw-attention-to-food-insecurity-due-to-climate-change/>

Aboriginal band in N.S. challenging natural gas storage project



A protester secures a sign along a major Nova Scotia highway in opposition to the construction of a natural gas storage facility near Stewiacke, N.S. on Monday, September 29, 2014. (Andrew Vaughan / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Published Thursday, February 18, 2016 8:56AM AST

Last Updated Thursday, February 18, 2016 2:52PM AST

INDIAN BROOK, N.S. -- An aboriginal band in Nova Scotia is challenging the provincial government's recent decision to approve a new underground natural gas storage facility.

The Indian Brook First Nation has issued a statement saying it will submit an appeal to the provincial environment minister, saying the Alton Natural Gas storage facility north of Halifax should not be built.

The band says the appeal is aimed at the industrial approval granted to Alton to operate a brine storage pond at Fort Ellis, N.S.

Environment Minister Margaret Miller says work will proceed while the appeal is being considered.

"The approval allowed for work to proceed immediately. It doesn't stop when there's an appeal," said Miller on Thursday following a cabinet meeting.

Miller says the deadline for appeals is Monday and she has 60 days to render a decision.

Last month, Energy Minister Michel Samson said the province believes the project is safe and doesn't threaten the environment.

Samson said the province granted approval after a thorough scientific assessment and consultations with the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs and the Indian Brook First Nation.

The project was put on hold in late 2014 after Mi'kmaq protesters complained that the company had failed to consult with the local native community.

Direct Link: <http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/aboriginal-band-in-n-s-challenging-natural-gas-storage-project-1.2782771>

QIA unhappy with Mary River Inuit impact-benefit deal's implementation

"Are we where we hoped to be when we signed the IIBA? We're not."

THOMAS ROHNER, February 19, 2016 - 4:00 pm



Enookie Inuarak, Olayuk Akesuk and Stephen Williamson-Bathory of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association make a presentation Feb. 18 at the organization's board meeting this week in Iqaluit. (PHOTO BY THOMAS ROHNER)

The Qikiqtani Inuit Association wants to see progress on implementation of the 2013 Inuit Impact and Benefit Agreement that's supposed to ensure Inuit in Nunavut's Qikiqtani region benefit from the Mary River mine on north Baffin.

But negotiators from the Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. have not been interested — until recently — in implementing the IIBA.

That's what Stephen Williamson-Bathory, director of major projects for the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, told the QIA's board of directors on Feb. 18 at their meeting in Iqaluit.

"Are we where we hoped to be when we signed the IIBA? We're not," Williamson-Bathory said in a presentation to the board.

Among other things, the IIBA calls for co-operation between Baffinland and QIA on various committees, whose members decide on implementation policies — and then make sure there's a process in place to carry these through.

Yet, until a recent shakeup at Baffinland, which brought in new top management, Williamson-Bathory said little was happening.

"Now Baffinland is committed to developing processes [to implement the IIBA] — we haven't had that before," he said.

Olayuk Akesuk, the board member from Cape Dorset, who also works on the IIBA implementation portfolio, told board members that communication has improved recently.

That now means monthly conference calls between the QIA and mining company representatives.

“The commitment from [Baffinland] is much better than before,” Akesuk said.

But the five communities most affected by the mine — Clyde River, Arctic Bay, Hall Beach, Igloolik and Pond Inlet — haven’t taken full advantage of the IIBA yet either, Akesuk said.

For example, the business capacity fund set up to help Inuit entrepreneurs win contracts at the mine, was underused in 2015 with some communities submitting no proposals to access the fund, Akesuk said.

And the lack of interest from residents of those communities in working at the mine has Baffinland and the QIA thinking of opening preferential job possibilities up to other communities, board members heard at the Feb. 18 meeting.

In terms of overall Inuit employment, the mine has yet to live up to its potential.

The proportion of Inuit within the Mary River workforce has actually decreased since the IIBA was signed, Williamson-Bathory told board members.

Beneficiaries of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement work only 17 or 18 per cent of the person-hours worked at the mine, he said.

The goal is to raise that number to 25 per cent by the end of the year.

“Setting the goal alone won’t make it happen... but it’s a starting point,” Williamson-Bathory said.

And although Baffinland committed \$1-million for training Inuit in the original agreement, Williamson-Bathory said the company has committed that money for the first time this year.

The Baffin Inuit organization is also renegotiating the agreement with Baffinland in light of the company’s Phase II proposal, pitched in 2014.

That proposal, which includes tripling the amount of iron ore shipped through Milne Inlet, increasing the shipping season to 10 months per year and constructing a railway to Milne Inlet, must first undergo a full review by the Nunavut Impact Review Board.

The revised IIBA will specifically target Inuit representation on the mine’s workforce, as well as address the lack of Inuit workers working for contractors hired by Baffinland.

The IIBA sets out the working relationship between Baffin Inuit and the mining company, which began shipping iron ore to Europe from Milne Inlet near Eclipse Sound in August 2015.

The agreement, signed in December 2013, has already filled QIA's coffers with millions of dollars.

In 2013-14, for example, QIA, which posted yearly deficits leading up to the agreement, declared an \$18.7-million surplus.

But QIA president Pauloosie (PJ) Akeeagok told *Nunatsiaq News* Feb. 18 that the agreement is about much more than money.

"It's about the land and the people and making sure Inuit, especially those most affected by the mine, benefit," Akeeagok said.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674qia_unhappy_with_mary_river_inuit_impact-benefit_deals_implementation/

Save Broadback forest, Waswanipi Cree tell Quebec government

CAROLINE PLANTE, MONTREAL GAZETTE

Published on: February 22, 2016 | Last Updated: February 22, 2016 5:29 PM EST



The Broadback River and forest in Waswanipi.

QUEBEC — A coalition of First Nations and environmentalists asked Premier Philippe Couillard on Monday to spend as much energy protecting the Broadback forest in Northern Quebec as he is trying to save Anticosti Island.

Couillard has argued for the past few months against oil and gas exploration/exploitation on pristine Anticosti Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, solemnly swearing in the house: "My name will never be associated with the aggressive savaging of a natural environment like Anticosti."

“I understand his position and his desire to protect an important natural area,” Marcel Happyjack, chief of the Cree First Nation of Waswanipi, said at a news conference in Quebec City. “That same logic should be applied to the Broadback forest, the last 10 per cent of intact boreal forest on our traditional territory, and one of our best tools against climate change.”

Happyjack said about 90 per cent of the forest on his territory has already been logged. Today, he warns a project by the logging industry to build two access roads through the untouched portion of the Broadback forest is threatening not only rare old-growth trees and the woodland caribou, but the Cree community’s way of life, which revolves around hunting, fishing and trapping.

Waswanipi has long called for the complete protection of this portion of the forest.

“Roads don’t go with caribou,” said Don Saganash, whose role as tallyman is to manage the traplines and safeguard the forest, rivers and lakes on the territory.

Woodland caribou are classified as threatened species by the Canadian government.

On July 13, 2015, Couillard and Grand Chief Matthew Coon Come, representing Quebec’s 18,000 Cree, signed a new agreement on co-management of forestry and protection of the woodland caribou. But the agreement did not include the Waswanipi section of the Broadback Valley.

Annexed to the deal was a letter from the premier affirming the government’s willingness “to have meaningful discussions” to bring in Waswanipi.

Happyjack said only one meeting took place, in October 2015. Now he is afraid five forestry companies will receive the go-ahead to log from COMEX, the independent government agency in charge of assessing development projects, before negotiations are finished.

“There is no social acceptability for this project,” insisted Nicolas Mainville of Greenpeace, warning further action against the roadwork project could be taken. “We’ll see what kind of scenario develops.”

Companies behind the project are: Matériaux Blanchet, Scierie Landrienne, Tembec, Eacom Timber Corporation and Resolute Forest Products.

“More than 90 per cent of Quebec’s virgin forests are protected through the imposition of a northern limit and the designation of protected areas,” stated Forestry Minister Laurent Lessard in a news release.

The minister responsible for Native Affairs, Geoffrey Kelley, said he will meet with Happyjack “in the very near future.”

Direct Link: <http://montrealgazette.com/news/quebec/save-broadback-forest-waswanipi-cree-tell-quebec-government>

First Nation group says UN committee has questions about Site C project

by THE CANADIAN PRESS

Posted Feb 22, 2016 11:38 am PST

Last Updated Feb 22, 2016 at 11:49 am PST



VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – On the same day that the BC Supreme Court is expected to hear an injunction application from BC Hydro, protesters opposed to Hydro's Site C dam say a **United Nations** Committee will have some pointed questions about the mega project.

The chief of the West Moberly First Nation says the UN Committee is meeting in Geneva and will ask Canadian diplomats about consent of indigenous peoples regarding resource projects.

Two First Nations in northeastern BC claim Canada is not respecting international law on aboriginal and treaty rights as BC Hydro proceeds with the huge hydroelectric project.

Meanwhile, Hydro is expected to ask a BC court to issue an injunction that would remove protesters from a tent camp near Fort St. John, where contractors hope to begin laying foundations for the Site C dam.

Direct Link: <http://www.news1130.com/2016/02/22/first-nation-group-says-un-committee-has-questions-about-site-c-project/>

'Clean Up the River,' Indigenous People Tell Justin Trudeau at the UN

By Natalie Alcoba

February 22, 2016 | 2:45 pm

Aboriginal communities are at the United Nations, accusing Canada of chronically violating their basic human rights as their fight for clean drinking water reaches the world stage.

Three First Nations — Grassy Narrows, Shoal Lake 40 and Neskantaga — are in Geneva, Switzerland to address the UN's Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which is reviewing Canada's human rights record.

The drinking water connected to all three communities has been [deemed](#) too unsafe to drink. In the case of Shoal Lake 40, residents have been on a boil water advisory for 17 years. For Neskantaga, it's been more than 20. And last year, the tiny Ojibway community of Grassy Narrows, in Ontario, declared a state of emergency when tests showed toxic chemicals in its water supply.

"Prime Minister Trudeau says that 'Canada is back' as a leader on the world stage," Grassy Narrows Deputy Chief Randy Fobister said in a statement. "Canada has not met its duty to obtain free, prior, and informed consent from Grassy Narrows' Ojibway culture when it allowed timber companies to log on Grassy Narrows Indigenous homeland, nor when the company dumped 10 tonnes of mercury poison into the river of the Grassy Narrows people. Clean up the river."

"Some of our children continue to be born with mercury poisoning and for decades nothing has been done to clean the poison from our river," Judy Da Silva, who spoke to the UN committee, said in a statement. "In the past Canada has not respected our rights but I still have hope that the tide will finally turn for us and that the prime minister will honor his word."

At the end of last year, there were 131 drinking water advisories in effect across 87 First Nations communities in Canada. Many are located in remote communities and rely on bottled water that is either flown in or transported by truck.

Grassy Narrows, which is home to about 600 people, sounded the alarm last year when it found mercury and DBPs (plasticizers also used in adhesives) present in the water. [CBC News reported](#) turbidity in the community's drinking water at 120 times the amount allowed by provincial rules.

Human Rights Watch also raised concerns with the committee about the drinking water conditions of Grassy Narrows.

The last time the UN body issued a report on Canada, in 2006, it expressed concern over "the significant disparities still remaining between Aboriginal people and the rest of the population in areas of employment, access to water, health, housing and education." The committee reviews whether countries that have signed on to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are complying with their obligations under the agreement.

During last year's federal election campaign, Trudeau pledged to do what it takes to ensure all First Nations have access to clean water within five years.

Direct Link: <https://news.vice.com/article/clean-up-the-river-indigenous-people-tell-justin-trudeau-at-the-un>

Cree nation urges government to fight logging project



Published Monday, February 22, 2016 8:20PM EST
Last Updated Tuesday, February 23, 2016 9:17AM EST

The Cree nation is urging the Quebec government to take a stand against the logging industry.

A project that involves building two access roads into a forest is causing concern among the Cree and several environmental groups.

The two access roads would be built into the Broadback Forest, about 800 kilometres north of Montreal.

The Cree claim the Broadback Forest is the last 10 per cent of intact boreal forest on their territory. They also say the area is vital for rare old growth trees and a last refuge for

threatened species, including boreal woodland caribou.

Proposed logging and clearcutting is currently under government review and threatens about 113,000 hectares of land.

The Cree nation, along with representatives from Greenpeace and some political allies gathered Monday in Quebec City to speak about an intact forest as a tool to fight climate change. They say the area is vital for the Cree way of life as they continue to rely on healthy animals and plants.

They are urging Premier Philippe Couillard to stand with them and denounce any and all logging operations in this forest.

“I would like to see Premier Couillard heed my call without hesitation,” said Marcel Happyjack, chief of the Waswanipi Cree nation.

“The government has to be clear right now, be consistent in its climate change commitments in its own targeted protested areas in the Plan Nord. Our message is clear: No more development can be allowed in the Broadback River Valley for the sake of the entire province of Quebec and the survival of the caribous and the protection of our Cree way of life,” he added.

An environmental and social impact review is underway by Comex, an independent body reporting to the Sustainable Development Minister David Heurtel.

As of now there have been no clear recommendations.

Direct Link: <http://montreal.ctvnews.ca/cree-nation-urges-government-to-fight-logging-project-1.2788663>

First Nation signs pipeline agreement

[Frank Peebles](#) / Prince George Citizen
February 22, 2016 09:44 PM



Nadleh Whut'en First Nation Chief Martin Louie performs a drum song to commemorate the signing of a deal between his people and TransCanada-Coastal GasLink Pipelines on Monday, as the company's project president Rick Gateman and Lheidli T'enneh First Nation Chief Dominic Frederick look on. - Citizen photo by Frank Peebles

Nadleh Whut'en First Nation Chief Martin Louie performs a drum song to commemorate the signing of a deal between his people and TransCanada-Coastal GasLink Pipelines on Monday, as the company's project president Rick Gateman and Lheidli T'enneh First Nation Chief Dominic Frederick look on. - Citizen photo by Frank Peebles

This is not the traditional territory of the Nadleh Whut'en First Nation, but a large contingent of their people came to Prince George this past week to sign an agreement for a pipeline to pass through their historic lands.

The Nadleh Whut'en are from the region surrounding Fraser Lake. Their historic territory extends halfway down Francois Lake and touches Uncha Lake to the west, the Braeside and McCall communities to the east, to Knewstubb Lake at its southern end and Babine Lake to its northern end. On Highway 16, The Nadleh Whut'en land stretches between the rural communities of Engen and Savory, taking in the villages of Fort Fraser, Fraser Lake and Endako along the way.

TransCanada Pipelines is the company tasked with connecting the natural gas reserves in the Peace-region with the Pacific Ocean shipping routes on behalf of Shell Canada Ltd. and its partners. The proposed route is about 670 kms from Dawson Creek to Kitimat and would, should the Nadleh Whut'en people consent, pass through their territory.

That consent - although provisional - has now been given in writing. A ceremony was held in Prince George on Friday to formalize the deal. Although details were withheld by both sides, there is a component of the contract that provides the Nadleh Whut'en people with a level of training for the jobs that will need to be filled, and also ongoing income as long as the pipeline is in use (in exactly the same manner as municipalities receive industrial tax for such activities).

The Lheidli T'enneh First Nation signed a similar agreement this past December covering the territory in and around Prince George, and chief Dominic Frederick offered his congratulations to the pipeline company and Nadleh Whut'en people when he officially welcomed them to the signing ceremony at TransCanada Pipeline's office here in this city.

The Nadleh Whut'en and the Lheidli T'enneh have been closely associated nations for thousands of years, he said, and the announcement was pleasing for the two to share here.

Prince George mayor Lyn Hall was also present and said it was a positive sign that respectful business was being done. "I can't stress too strongly the importance of building relationships," he said.

The ceremony commenced with a performance by the Nadleh Whut'en drummers, including longtime elected chief Martin Louie.

There was also the unveiling of a piece of original art, a cedar circular carving by Coast Salish (Squamish First Nation) artist George Hemeon.

It will hang on the TransCanada Pipelines wall alongside a number of other artworks as, one by one, the founding communities of the region sign on for this proposal.

Rick Gateman, president of the Coastal GasLink project, said on behalf of the company that he was pleased with the dialogue he has heard from First Nations stakeholders along the route and this signing was evidence of being on the right path.

"You've read in the newspaper about LNG (liquefied natural gas) being a transformational industry, according to premier Christy Clark, and I agree with her, and one thing she said I really took to heart was how it will not leave a particular sector of the province (meaning aboriginal peoples) behind," Gateman said. "We are offering benefits, employment opportunities, contracting opportunities, and for us it makes good business sense to tap into local land-use knowledge, ecological knowledge, and employing people locally."

Chief Louie was both pleased with the deal at hand, but critical of industrial practices in recent B.C. history on their lands, and made it clear the Nadleh Whut'en would hold TransCanada Pipelines to account on the laying of this line and its ongoing maintenance.

He said forestry has harvested trees for decades and no stumpage returns have ever come to the Nadleh Whut'en government for that; the Kenney Dam was built in the 1950s and caused their entire sustenance system (fishing and hunting patterns) to be upended with no accountability; and the Endako Mine was built in 1965 without a word of consent obtained or any royalty money paid to the First Nation of record.

Even the fur trade, he said (his people were among the first to do trapping business directly with Simon Fraser), degraded the relationship his indigenous fore-bearers had with the land, plants and animals, turning them into commodities in the eyes of people who knew better that these things were carefully balanced systems that required subtle interaction, not commercial-scale resource management.

"I thank you for your faith in me to try to move forward," said Louie to the Nadleh Whut'en people (about 40) who made the trip to witness the signing ceremony.

"This agreement is significant. We stand to benefit, but much more must be done to ensure that flows to us, so our kids can see the benefits, not just of TransCanada but of other projects people want to see done on our territory."

Louie added that "in order to move ahead we have to protect land, water, plants, animals for our unborn. That's the path we have to go down. How do we take part in what's brought to us (industrial proposals) and still protect the land?"

More than 20 First Nations along the proposed Coastal GasLink route must sign on for there to be full indigenous license to proceed.

- See more at: <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/news/local-news/first-nation-signs-pipeline-agreement-1.2181774#sthash.yUXBHJVN.dpuf>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Canada violates human rights, northern Ontario First Nations tell UN

United Nations committee reviewing Canada's and Ontario's record on human rights

CBC News Posted: Feb 22, 2016 8:52 AM ET Last Updated: Feb 22, 2016 8:52 AM ET



Judy DaSilva is expected to tell the United Nations in Geneva on Monday that the failure to clean up mercury contamination in the lakes and rivers near her home at Grassy Narrows First Nation is a violation of human rights.

The lack of safe drinking water in three northwestern Ontario First Nations is on the agenda Monday at the United Nations Committee meeting on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Shoal Lake 40, Neskantaga and Grassy Narrows (Asubpeeschoseewagong Netum Anishinabek) First Nations were all planning to make presentations to the committee in Geneva, Switzerland.

None of the First Nations have tap water that is safe to drink.

Grassy Narrows wants that recognized as a violation of several rights including the right to health. Community member Judy DaSilva is also expected to speak to the committee about the **mercury contamination at Grassy Narrows**, dating back to the 1960s.

"Prime Minister [Justin] Trudeau says that 'Canada is back' as a leader on the world stage," said Grassy Narrows Deputy Chief Randy Fobister.

"But how can Canada lead while mercury poison sits in our river and while our families drink unsafe water for 20 years? It is time for Canada to walk the talk and act now to clean our river and provide safe tap water for our people."

A "do not consume" order was issued for well water at Grassy Narrows in 2013. Water from the treatment plant in the community needs to be boiled before it is safe for drinking. That order was issued in 2015.

Neskantaga has **the longest-standing boil water advisory in Canada**. The community has been without safe water since 1995.

Shoal Lake 40 First Nation has been under a boil water advisor since 1997.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-water-woes-un-1.3458140>

Council of Yukon First Nations backs groups applying to Supreme Court over Peel dispute

First Nations and environmental groups now waiting to see if case will be heard by Canada's top court

CBC News Posted: Feb 22, 2016 1:21 PM CT Last Updated: Feb 22, 2016 4:04 PM CT



The First Nations of Nacho Nyak Dun, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in and Vuntut Gwitchin, along with CPAWS Yukon and the Yukon Conservation Society, have applied for leave to appeal a Yukon Court of Appeal decision in November. (Cheryl Kawaja/CBC)

The Council of Yukon First Nations is publicly supporting three first nations and two environmental groups in their fight to have the Peel Watershed case heard by Canada's highest court.

Members of CYFN passed a resolution at a recent leadership meeting about the Peel, agreeing that if the Supreme Court decides to hear the case, it will apply to be interveners.

Grand Chief Ruth Massie said it's important to protect the integrity of the the Umbrella Final Agreement and Land Claims.

The First Nations of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, Nacho Nyak Dun and Vuntut Gwitchin, along with CPAWS Yukon and the Yukon Conservation Society, have applied for leave to appeal the **Yukon Court of Appeal's November decision** to send the Peel planning process back to an earlier stage.

All parties have now submitted documents to the Supreme Court and are waiting to hear if the case will be heard.

Earlier this month, the Gwich'in Tribal Council **filed its application for intervenor status in the case.**

Meanwhile, the Yukon Government **is urging the Supreme Court to not hear the case,** arguing there is no issue of national or public importance at stake.

The Supreme Court is expected to take a couple of months before reaching a decision.



Chris Rider takes the helm of the Yukon chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society in April. (Submitted by Chris Rider)

CPAWS has new director

One of the environmental groups involved in the Peel dispute has a new executive director.

Chris Rider, who worked in the top position at BYTE Empowering Youth for four years, will take up his new position with the Yukon chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society in April.

Rider fills the shoes of Gill Cracknell, who retired last fall.

Corrections

- A previous version of this story stated that Gill Cracknell was the outgoing director at CPAWS Yukon. Cracknell retired last fall.

Feb 22, 2016 2:55 PM CT

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cyfn-backs-groups-peel-watershed-1.3458733>

Aboriginal activist fears B.C. dam project will destroy sacred land

Helen Knott hopes to halt construction of the BC Hydro Site C dam project, but B.C. Energy Minister Bill Bennett says it's too late.



The BC Hydro Site C dam project would flood sacred burial grounds and First Nations hunting and gathering areas.

By: [Joanna Smith](#) Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Tue Feb 23 2016

OTTAWA—Helen Knott, 28, believes the stories of her people are alive in the Peace River valley of northeastern British Columbia and fears they will be lost in the flood of a \$8.8-billion hydroelectric dam project.

“When I think about the valley, I think about stories,” Knott said as she described the 107 kilometres of land the project would flood, destroying farmland, sacred burial grounds, as well as areas Treaty 8 First Nations use for hunting, fishing, gathering medicines and other cultural reasons.

They often gather to tell those stories around the fire at the Rocky Mountain Fort, a protest camp Knott and others — mostly young indigenous women — set up Dec. 31 to block the clearing of land to prepare for further construction of the BC Hydro Site C dam project.

“I see it and I feel it as a right to identity, that ability to tell those stories, that ability to connect with those lands and access the blood memories that exists, that would surface by being within that territory,” Knott, a social worker and community activist from Prophet River First Nation, B.C., said recently during a visit to Ottawa.

It is a way of viewing the world — and asserting rights within it — that is hard to fit within the bureaucratic box of environmental assessment processes, judicial reviews, circumscribed consultations with Aboriginal Peoples and the promise of 10,000 new jobs brought into the area.

Yet this view is what pushed Knott to set up the camp and become, quite literally, possibly the last thing standing between her land and the BC Hydro project.

And she has a question for Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, whose government she and local landowners argue could intervene to halt the project in a number of ways, including by revoking federal permits.

“Where are you now?” Knott said.

The previous Conservative government gave approval to the project, as did B.C., in October 2014 following a federal-provincial joint review, concluding the environmental and other impacts the Site C dam would have were justified under the circumstances.

The new Environment Minister, Catherine McKenna, said Tuesday the project was already underway, but BC Hydro must meet requirements laid out by the environmental assessment.

“I have been and will continue to be engaged in discussions with indigenous leaders on how we can work together to ensure better consultation, environmental assessment and natural resource development,” McKenna said in the House of Commons during question period.

Meanwhile, Knott and the small group, allied with nearby farmers and other landowners whose homes and lifestyles are also at stake, could be cleared out in the near future if a British Columbia Supreme Court judge grants BC Hydro, a provincial Crown corporation, an injunction to do so.

The hearing began Monday.

“We took this step because we have an obligation to our customers to keep the project on-schedule and on-budget,” BC Hydro spokesman Craig Fitzsimmons wrote in an emailed statement Tuesday, adding he would not discuss further details while the matter is before the court.

B.C. Premier Christy Clark said last month that she wanted to push the Site C dam project “past the point of no return.”

That is exactly what Rob Botterell, the lawyer representing the First Nations and area landowners, fears will happen, noting BC Hydro plans to continue construction as challenges make their way through the courts.

“We are confident we are ultimately going to win, but that will be too late,” Botterell said during his visit to Ottawa with Knott last week.

B.C. Energy Minister Bill Bennett said the project already went through.

“We’re already past the point of no return,” Bennett said in an interview Tuesday, adding BC Hydro has already awarded \$2.1 billion in contracts and will award another \$1 billion by the end of the year.

“We’re well beyond a place where it would make any sense to consider not building the project,” he said, adding the province has done its due diligence and he does not expect the court to rule against the Site C dam.

“We are very confident we have done things right,” he said.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/02/23/aboriginal-activist-fears-bc-dam-project-will-destroy-sacred-land.html>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Inquiry into missing aboriginal women must not ignore indigenous law, advocates say

Traditional laws have been “undermined” and “damaged,” says one expert, who has been helping communities rediscover and rebuild such laws and learn how to apply them in the current context.



Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett says she is considering ways to incorporate indigenous law into the national inquiry on missing and murdered aboriginal women.

By: [Joanna Smith](#) Ottawa Bureau reporter, Published on Sat Feb 20 2016

OTTAWA—Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett says she is considering ways to incorporate indigenous law, often based on collaborative analysis of stories and other traditional knowledge, into the national inquiry on [missing and murdered aboriginal women](#).

The Native Women’s Association of Canada and the Feminist Alliance for International Action [published a list of recommendations](#) for the [upcoming national inquiry](#) that argued

mainstream Canadian law had failed to adequately address the problem of violence against indigenous women.

“Missing and murdered indigenous women are a consequence of state lawlessness created by Canadian law’s inability to deal with the ongoing aftermath of colonialism and its attendant violence. These spaces of lawlessness are also the result of the denial of indigenous laws and legal orders since the arrival of settlers,” says the report based on discussions at a symposium on the inquiry that took place at the University of Ottawa last month.

“The inquiry must not perpetuate the undermining and erasure of indigenous laws and legal orders, but rather must seek to practically support indigenous lawfulness and engagement with indigenous legal orders,” says the report published last week.

Val Napoleon, director of the Indigenous Law Research Unit at the University of Victoria, has been working with a team to help communities rediscover and rebuild their traditional laws and learn how to apply them in the current context.

“Indigenous law hasn’t gone anywhere in Canada, but it has been undermined and it’s been damaged. The work is about rebuilding the conditions of lawfulness in our societies and it’s a long process, obviously, because there have been a lot of changes in our society,” Napoleon said in an interview Saturday.

“I’m not talking about going back to some ideal state. I’m talking about indigenous societies as having legal orders, as having law, as having aspirations of safety and fairness and inclusion as part of those legal orders and we have always struggled, as every other society has, with problems of human being living together. Our societies were no more peaceful or no more violent than any others and we had systems of law to deal with that,” said Napoleon.

Much of indigenous law involves examining oral histories and traditional stories woven into the cultures of indigenous communities to learn what they have to say about obligations to one another, how to solve problems and what should be done when those laws are broken.

That includes thinking about these stories critically and challenging their conclusions when they perpetuate sexism, homophobia and other power imbalances, especially important in the context of gendered violence.

“Where indigenous laws were sexist in the past, we have to change them,” said Napoleon.

Bennett said she supports the recommendation and that a group of experts will be gathering in the near future to discuss how it can be put into practice.

“There are a number of experts in indigenous law and indigenous knowledge who, in trying to describe a commission that would be unique . . . are going to come together, hopefully next month, to see how we can be as creative and innovative as we can

incorporating indigenous law and indigenous knowledge into the process,” Bennett said in an interview Friday.

One way to incorporate indigenous law into the inquiry, as recommended by the report, would be to establish “indigenous law lodges,” which would involve setting aside a physical space at the inquiry to allow for this rebuilding — and how it applies to gendered violence — to take place.

“Those are the kinds of things that we are very interested in,” said Bennett, who also said she also heard people speak about justice circles, restorative justice and other approaches during the pre-inquiry consultations that wrapped up last week.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/02/20/inquiry-into-missing-aboriginal-women-must-not-ignore-indigenous-law-advocates-say.html>

Ontario pledges \$100 million to help end violence against indigenous women



Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne speaks to CTV's Question Period on Oct., 25, 2015.

Keith Leslie, The Canadian Press

Published Tuesday, February 23, 2016 10:59AM EST

Last Updated Tuesday, February 23, 2016 3:31PM EST

TORONTO -- Ontario will spend \$100 million over the next three years on a long-term strategy to end violence against indigenous women, most of it on support for families.

Indigenous women are three times more likely to experience violence and to be murdered than other women in Ontario, Premier Kathleen Wynne said Tuesday.

"This is devastating families and entire communities, and it's a problem our entire province needs to face," Wynne said.

Indigenous people make up 2.4 per cent of Ontario's population, but they account for 26 per cent of the children in care. Indigenous women make up six per cent of the province's homicide victims.

"Behind these grim statistics lies violence," said Wynne. "Behind these grim statistics lie the heartbreaking stories of mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts and grandmothers that we've lost."

For decades, governments across Canada "shamefully" neglected the deep wounds inflicted upon indigenous communities, added Wynne.

"An entire society looked the other way, or worse, shrugged our shoulders as too many First Nations, Metis and Inuit women continued to experience violence, go missing or be murdered," she said.

The provincial strategy, called Walking Together, includes \$80 million for a well-being program to support indigenous families in crisis and help communities deal with the effects of inter-generational violence and trauma.

Sylvia Maracle of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres said the provincial strategy has all the parties rowing in the same direction.

"We're going to leave a different legacy for our children and our grandchildren," she said. "There will be space to talk, to heal, to remember and to develop their indigenous identity, and for that we are grateful."

There will also be \$15.75 million to ensure indigenous women and communities have effective support when dealing with the justice system and to help develop a survivor-oriented plan to prevent human trafficking.

Another \$2.32 million will be used to help police investigate missing person cases, improve training for police and Crown attorneys and provide new tools for First Nations police forces.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath said it was good to see the government try to address the issue of violence against indigenous women, but she also wants action to address other long standing issues in First Nations communities, including drinking water, education and extreme poverty.

"Yes this is an important initiative and I support it, but we also have to look at some of the other really serious systemic issues that are facing indigenous populations," said Horwath. "When you have a situation where populations are hopeless, then I'm sure it creates circumstances that lead to more violence."

The provincial strategy also incorporates a number of the Calls to Action from the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including mandatory indigenous cultural competency and anti-racism training for all civil servants.

"(It) is a step toward creating dialogue and building more positive relationships between Ontario and its indigenous peoples," said Metis president Gary Lipinski.

It is going to take some time to organize a national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, so Ontario will move forward in the interim, said Wynne, who will attend a roundtable on the issue in Winnipeg this week.

"The work that's been done in Ontario has informed the discussion in terms of where we might go at the national level," she said.

"What happens next after the work that we've just laid out as this strategy, I hope, will be dovetailed at the national level, but it's not going to stop us doing what needs to be done in Ontario."

Direct Link: <http://london.ctvnews.ca/ontario-pledges-100-million-to-help-end-violence-against-indigenous-women-1.2789287>

Beyond the inquiry: families of missing, murdered indigenous women want action



A student at Balmoral Hall created this project using red butterflies to represent all 1,017 missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in Canada.

Chinta Puxley, THE CANADIAN PRESS

Published Tuesday, February 23, 2016 2:28PM CST

WINNIPEG -- Lorelei Williams left the first roundtable on missing and murdered indigenous women in tears after families who had lost loved ones fought to be one of the four people allowed to speak.

The British Columbia woman, whose aunt went missing in 1978 and whose cousin's remains were found on the farm of convicted killer Robert Pickton, felt revictimized by the experience.

As premiers, federal and provincial ministers gather once again Wednesday for the second roundtable in Winnipeg, Williams said she hopes this time will be different. This

time, she said, leaders need to listen more carefully to voices like hers and do what they can to address the issue in their own jurisdictions.

"Once they get to know the families and what it does to them, I feel like (they) can fight a better battle," she said. "There is a lot of racism that has flawed cases and that needs to be addressed."

The RCMP has estimated at least 1,200 indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered since 1980. Although indigenous women make up 4.3 per cent of the Canadian population, they account for 16 per cent of female homicides and 11.3 per cent of missing women.

A lot has changed since the last roundtable a year ago when calls for a national inquiry on the issue loomed large. The Conservatives, who steadfastly refused to call an inquiry, lost the fall federal election to the Liberals, who have promised one will convene this year.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne is attending the roundtable. She said an inquiry is one way to address violence against indigenous women, but there are other things provinces can do on their own.

Wynne announced Tuesday her government is spending \$100 million over the next three years on a long-term anti-violence strategy, most of it to help support indigenous families. She said she hopes the roundtable will result in "concrete actions" including a co-ordinated public awareness campaign.

"I hope that some of the strategies that we're bringing forward will be things that we'll see echoed across the country," she said. "The national inquiry is important. I have supported indigenous communities all along in calling for that national inquiry but it cannot be used as an excuse for not taking action."

Federal Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, who is attending the roundtable, has toured the country hearing from family members regarding what the inquiry should look like. She said she hopes the roundtable will be a chance to get the provinces and territories on board as well.

"We've advanced a lot in terms of what we've heard from family members, suggestions in terms of the framework for the inquiry," Wilson-Raybould said.

"It's going to be a good discussion. I'm looking forward to it."

The roundtable is to set to wrap up on Friday.

Direct Link: <http://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/beyond-the-inquiry-families-of-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-want-action-1.2789691>

Inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women no simple task

If the inquiry gets it right it could heal decades-old wounds and perhaps begin to restore trust in the justice system



Janet Pete, left, and her niece Genevieve Sullivan comfort each other during a march through the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, B.C., on Saturday February 14, 2015, held to honour missing and murdered women and girls from the community.

By: [Gillian Steward](#) Atkinson Fellow, Published on Tue Feb 23 2016

The [Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls](#) will not be a timid affair, and nor should it be.

So many of these killings were easy to ignore because some of the victims were prostitutes, and almost all lived lives mired in poverty. When they went missing authorities often chalked it up to their habit of running away or simply wandering off to the big city.

Whatever happened to them, it was as if it were their own fault.

In Canada, it seems, no one has lower status than an aboriginal female.

But how should the inquiry tackle this problem?

It's already obvious from the pre-inquiry consultation process led by Carolyn Bennett, the minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, that there is plenty of interest in this inquiry, plenty of people who want to step up and be heard.

Closed consultation [sessions](#) were held from Halifax to Whitehorse to Vancouver and lots of places in between.

Most of those attending — about 2,000 in total — were family of victims, social workers, activists, or community elders.

Their suggestions for issues that the inquiry must address produced a long list that includes: causes of violence and abuse, review of investigations of murders, training for police and criminal justice personnel, and media treatment of cases involving murdered or missing Indigenous women.

Arriving at solid conclusions and recommendations for any one of those issues would be a complicated task. And what about compensation for victims' families? Will that be an outcome of the investigation?

There was only one item that everyone agreed on: The chair of the inquiry must be an Indigenous woman, and most of the panellists should also be Indigenous.

As participants in the consultation process came forward, the numbers of murdered and missing women grew. In 2010 the [Native Women's Association of Canada](#) pegged it at about 600. In 2014 the RCMP revealed that 1,107 Indigenous women had been murdered in Canada between 1980 and 2012, about 16 per cent of all murdered women, far higher than their proportion of the population.

Just over 75 per cent of those murders occurred in the western provinces with B.C. and Alberta recording the highest numbers. When murders of Indigenous women in northern Canada are included, the west and the north account for 80 per cent.

After the current round of consultations Minister Bennett said the actual number was much higher than the one reported by the RCMP. Patty Hadju, minister for the status of women, suggested it might be as high as 4,000.

Given that so many of the victims are from the west maybe the inquiry should be headquartered in Vancouver, Edmonton, or Saskatoon.

This inquiry is going to be far more complex than the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which examined the residential school system and its impact on Indigenous children.

That commission had a very clear mandate: "to gather written and oral history of residential schools and to work toward reconciliation between former students and the rest of Canada."

So far the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women has not spelled out a specific mandate.

But it could be wading into a quagmire if it sets out to solve missing persons cases or reopen files on deaths that were not ruled as murder at the time.

There are also jurisdictional questions. Can a federal inquiry look into the practices of a provincial police force? What about provincial coroners who may have overlooked obvious signs of foul play?

There are already horrendous examples of how murdered Aboriginal women are not considered worthy of thorough investigation by police. The Robert Pickton saga is proof of that. And there is ample evidence that even the highest levels of the justice system are not beyond suspicion. In 2004 a provincial court judge in Prince George, B.C. was convicted of luring aboriginal teenagers into his office where he sexually assaulted them.

This dirty little Canadian secret needs to be aired; people need to tell their stories for one and all to hear.

If the inquiry gets it right it could heal decades-old wounds and perhaps begin to restore trust in the justice system.

Gillian Steward is a Calgary writer and journalist, and former managing editor of the Calgary Herald. Her column appears every other week. gsteward@telus.net

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2016/02/23/inquiry-into-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-no-simple-task.html>

MMIW roundtable starts in Winnipeg, days after aboriginal woman killed

'We do not want to wait for a national inquiry, we want to do things right now,' Manitoba premier says

[CBC News](#) Posted: Feb 25, 2016 9:51 AM CT Last Updated: Feb 25, 2016 4:41 PM CT



Winnipeg has been called ground zero for the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women. (CBC)

Families of missing and murdered indigenous women who are in Winnipeg for a national roundtable say they want answers in the deaths of their loved ones, while Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger says now is the time to act on the issue.

"Tragedies are still occurring. We do not want to wait for a national inquiry, we want to do things right now that will help families deal with tragedy," Selinger told reporters during a noon-hour break from the roundtable meeting on Thursday.



Selinger said his priorities include addressing issues of violence, developing programs to preserve language and culture, tackling human trafficking, improving ways to support families in reconciliation and healing, and making sure they're connected to support service networks.

He added that he wants to make sure the history of indigenous people is being taught in schools. The situation can only improve if everyone is involved, Selinger said.

"This is not just a story about indigenous women and girls, this is a story of how we treat each other as Canadians across the country," he said. "The issues benefit us all. This is part of the larger story of reconciliation we need to address as a country."

The roundtable began Wednesday with closed-door sessions for families only and is now into meetings with premiers, ministers, indigenous leaders and families of murdered and missing indigenous women.

In a 2014 report, the RCMP estimated there have been 1,181 cases of missing and murdered aboriginal women and girls in the country since 1980 — 164 are missing and 1,017 were victims of homicide.

Among those attending the roundtable are the mother and sister of Carol King, a Mi'kmaq woman from western Newfoundland who was slain in Herschel, Sask., on Aug. 6, 2011. Her killer has never been caught.

"It's been a struggle. It's been very stressful, especially when you don't have the help that you need," said her sister, Brenda King, who flew to the Winnipeg roundtable from Nova Scotia.

"When I knew something was wrong on Aug. 6, I called the police in Rosetown and I asked them to go and look for her because something was wrong, her phone was shut off. And they didn't go."



Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, called on provincial and federal governments to create and fund plans to act immediately. (CBC)

The family said they hope that talking more about Carol will increase the chances of her murder being solved.

"It's been devastating. I'd like to get answers. This is very hard," said their mother, Yvonne King. "Today I hope we get some answers, that's what I'm hoping for. Just some closure."

Dawn Lavell-Harvard, president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, underscored the need for improvements to how indigenous women are treated by the policing, corrections and child welfare services.

"Many of those institutions, when our women leave a First Nation and are looking for a better life and come into the cities, these are the structures that are discriminating against our women," she said.

"These are the structures that have the opportunity to create a better life, to create safety."

Lavell-Harvard also agreed that action cannot wait until an inquiry is completed in two years. She called on provincial and federal governments to immediately create plans and put budgets in place to support them.

Meeting comes days after homicide

The roundtable is taking place just days after another homicide of an aboriginal woman in Winnipeg.

Of the five homicides in Winnipeg so far in 2016, three have been aboriginal women. Marilyn Rose Munroe, 41, was the most recent victim; her body was found in a house on Pritchard Avenue on Monday.

"Three of five murders this year [being aboriginal victims] shows we need to get on with it — work with indigenous organizations about safety programs in the community, to do the education required of all of us as citizens to be respectful of diversity and differences and understand the history of indigenous people," Selinger said.



The body of Marilyn Rose Munroe, 41, was found in a Winnipeg house on Monday. Police have deemed her death a homicide, but have not yet said how she died. (Facebook)

"It's understanding that builds empathy and relationships that build empathy. I say the most important thing to do is keep talking together and working together ... not to isolate the problem and say it's somebody else's problem."

Nahanni Fontaine, Manitoba's special adviser on aboriginal women's issues, believes there has been a shift in attitudes since the Liberals replaced the Conservatives as Canada's government. She's confident some solutions to the problem of missing and murdered women can be found.

Both she and federal Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett — who came through Winnipeg earlier this month as part of her pre-inquiry tour — have called Winnipeg ground zero in national awareness of missing and murdered indigenous women. The death of Tina Fontaine and the near-death of Rinelle Harper propelled the issue into a wider spotlight, Bennett said.

Bennett's tour and acknowledgement of the problem are proof that Canada is on the cusp of finally dealing with the matter, Fontaine said.

"If there was ever an opportunity for change, it is absolutely right now," she said.

Meetings in Winnipeg with families of victims will be difficult, but an important way to find solutions, Fontaine added.

"In some respects [it can] retraumatize them. That's the nature of this issue. I often talk about family strength and resiliency and courage to constantly be called upon to share their journeys and stories, and they do it," she said, adding there are plenty of supports on hand for the families during the meetings

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/mmiw-national-roundtable-winnipeg-1.3463494>

Premiers must act on missing, murdered women: native women's association



A woman wipes away a tear around a sharing circle at the 2nd National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Winnipeg on Thursday, Feb. 25, 2016. The meeting brought together federal ministers, national Indigenous leaders, provincial and territorial premiers and ministers and families from across the country to discuss both the national inquiry, as well as actions governments can take now to begin to address the issue. THE CANADIAN PRESS/John Woods

By: Chinta Puxley The Canadian Press Published on Thu Feb 25 2016

WINNIPEG — Premiers have long lobbied the federal government to act on missing and murdered indigenous women.

Now the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada says it is time for them to back up their call for action with some money of their own.

Dawn Lavell-Harvard said the roundtable on missing and murdered indigenous women taking place in Winnipeg is a chance for provinces to commit to help vulnerable women rather than wait until a national inquiry on the issue has wrapped up.

"We want to see the provinces and the federal government coming forward with action plans and budgets to back up those action plans," she said Thursday.

"We cannot afford to wait two years for the end of the inquiry when we know many of the things we need to have happening. We need to start taking action now."

Hundreds of family members, indigenous leaders and the country's top policy makers have gathered for the meeting.

People sat around a large table covered with candles and photos of some of Canada's roughly 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women. Some wept and hugged while volunteers walked through the room with tissues.

Lavell-Harvard said provinces need to look at how their child-welfare systems, policing practices and corrections facilities affect indigenous women.

"When our women leave a First Nation looking for a better life, coming into the cities, these are the structures that are discriminating against our women," she said.

"These are the structures that have the opportunity to create safety. In the past, they have been integral in putting our women into unsafe situations."

National Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations said premiers drafting their budgets can do their part to improve education, affordable housing, detox and wellness centres.

But he said there needs to be national co-ordination on actions aimed at ending violence.

"This is a tragedy that really has to end," he said.

The roundtable experience was bittersweet for those whose loved ones make up Canada's missing and murdered women.

Some compared the experience to ripping open a wound.

Bernadette Smith, whose sister Claudette Osborne disappeared without a trace in 2008, said it's vital for law-makers to hear from those left to grieve.

"It's extremely important for myself and others to have this opportunity with our ministers and our premiers to have our voices heard and for them to really feel our pain and connect to who our loved ones were — really embedding themselves in the stories," she said.

"It's one thing to see the name. It's another thing to hear the story and meet the families."

Just days after an indigenous woman was found dead in a Winnipeg home, Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger said he agrees that provinces shouldn't wait for the inquiry to do what they can.

Manitoba wants to support indigenous families who have lost loved ones and that should be the goal across Canada, he said.

"We have to erase those boundaries and find ways to keep all of our citizens safe," Selinger said. "It doesn't matter what your background is. You should be able to walk in the streets and feel safe."

The roundtable wraps up late Friday.

Direct Link: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2016/02/25/everyone-must-work-together-on-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women-selinger.html>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

National Council Does Not Condone Faux Native American Churches or Marijuana Use

Native American Churches

2/18/16

There is a growing trend in the United States, of organizations adopting the name "Native American Church" as a means of trying to obtain the protection of federal law, which was established by the government to recognize and protect the legitimate indigenous religions that have prospered on the North American continent since long before European settlers arrived.

In the case of the Peyote Religion, archaeological and ethnographic evidence demonstrates its presence in North America for more than 10,000 years. However, organizations and individuals claiming protection under the umbrella of these organizations want to capitalize on this ancient practice despite having no connection to it whatsoever.

Some of these illegitimate organizations, comprised of non-Native people, are now claiming that marijuana, ayahuasca and other substances are part of Native American Church theology and practice. Nothing could be further from the truth. We, the National Council of Native American Churches are now stepping forward to advise the public that we do not condone the activities of these illegitimate organizations.

The National Council of Native American Churches consists of legitimate, indigenous member organizations that include the Native American Church of North America, the Azzee' Bee Nahaga of Diné Nation, the Native American Church of the State of Oklahoma, the Native American Church of the State of South Dakota, and invited Leaders of the Consejo Regional Wixarika of Mexico. We member organizations of the National Council speak for all of our chapters and the individual members of the chapters on this matter of national importance.

Federal laws protecting legitimate, indigenous Native American Churches have a long and purposeful history. Back in our history, there was a time when our spiritual beliefs were outlawed. People were jailed, put in insane asylums and killed for participating in the Sun Dance and other ceremonies. This, too, includes taking peyote as our sacrament. Federal laws enacted first in the late 1970s were intended to protect our right to practice our religion. We oppose the attempts of non-Natives to come in and misuse government protection of traditional Native American religion to conduct illegal activity that has nothing to do with our traditional ways.

We do not recognize, condone, or allow the use of marijuana, or any other substance other than peyote, in any of our religious services. To the contrary, the only plant that serves as a sacrament is peyote, and without peyote, our ceremonies cannot take place. We reject and condemn any claim by these illegitimate organizations that marijuana or any other plant serves or has ever served as a sacrament in addition to peyote in indigenous Native American Church ceremonies.

To the extent that the claims of any of these organizations rest on allegations or inferences of an affiliation with traditional Native American Church organizations or with any legitimate chapter of the Native American Church, such claims should be rejected. The mere use of the term Native American Church does not entitle any of these illicit organizations to any legal protection under federal law.

We know who we are, and we know where we come from. We know the atrocities visited upon us. We reject the attempts to grasp onto our indigenous ways and deceive the public by claiming them as their own for their own personal enjoyment or for profit.

The National Council of Native American Churches wrote this letter on February 13. It was signed by Sandor Iron Rope, President□Native American Church of North America; Steven Benally, President□Azzee' Bee Nahaga of Dine Nation; Charles Haag, President□Native American Church of the State of Oklahoma; Albert Red Bear, Jr., President□Native American Church of the State of South Dakota Native; and Santos De La Cruz Carrillo, Consejo Regional Wixarika Mexico.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/18/national-council-does-not-condone-faux-native-american-churches-or-marijuana-use-163464>

Traveling exhibit explores health of Native Americans



MARQUETTE — The Upper Peninsula is home to three Native American communities, and Northern Michigan University is centrally located too each of them.

This was part of the inspiration for bringing the exhibit *Native Voices* to campus. Native Voices was originally on display at the National Library of Medicine and examines health and medicine concepts among native people.

“It was very popular and they put it together in a traveling form and ran a test on that. It was really received well. It’s really neat because of our Native American Studies Program,” said Bruce Sarjeant the Reference Documents and Maps Librarian at NMU. Sarjeant was the driving force behind organizing the event.

“It’s part of our responsibility to our students and our community to be able to share a variety of perspectives and to help people to have opportunities to learn about one another,” added NMU President Fritz Erickson.

Thursday night was the opening ceremony, which included a drum performance and traditional foods. If you’d like to see the exhibit, it will be on display at the Lydia M. Olson Library through the month of March.

Direct Link: <http://abc10up.com/traveling-exhibit-explores-health-of-native-americans/>

Watch: 'Songs My Brothers Taught Me' Trailer Unearths the Troubles of Modern Native American Life



By **Zack Sharf** | **Indiewire** February 19, 2016 at 9:57AM

The film's theatrical premiere will take place Wednesday, March 2 at New York City's Film Forum.

On the heels of picking up Chloé Zhao's critically acclaimed Native American drama "Songs My Brothers Taught Me" at the end of last month, Kino Lorber has released a spiritual and intriguing new trailer for the drama. The movie, which marks Zhao's debut, played at Sundance and Cannes last year and is currently nominated for three Independent Spirit Awards, including Best First Film and Best Cinematography.

"Songs My Brothers Taught Me" centers around Lakota Native Americans living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in the Badlands of South Dakota. Starring non-professional actors, the plot follows a high school senior who must reevaluate his future after the death of his father leaves him responsible for his 13-year-old sister.

"'Songs' soars with emotional resonances in an infinite landscape," said Kino Lorber CEO Richard Lorber in an official statement after his company acquired the picture. "We were entranced by Chloe's characters pursuing their destinies in small but poignant ways against grand cinematic vistas. It's a film to be cherished and we're inspired to bring it to audiences nationwide."

Kino Lorber is planning a spring 2016 roll out, beginning with a theatrical premiere at New York City's Film Forum on Wednesday, March 2. Watch the trailer above.

Direct Link: <http://www.indiewire.com/article/watch-songs-my-brothers-taught-me-trailer-unearths-the-troubles-of-modern-native-american-life-20160219>

Fewer poor in Latin America but indigenous people still lag others - World Bank

Source: Thomson Reuters Foundation - Thu, 18 Feb 2016 18:07 GMT

Author: [Astrid Zweynert](#) [More news from our correspondents](#)



Indigenous women attend a Mass celebrated by Pope Francis (not pictured) in San Cristobal de las Casas, Mexico, February 15, 2016. REUTERS/Max Rossi

LONDON, Feb 18 (Thomson Reuters Foundation) - Latin America's indigenous peoples have benefited less than other people from the region's economic boom in the first decade of this century, according to researchers at the World Bank.

Their [study](#) found that more than 70 million indigenous people escaped poverty during the period thanks to economic growth and social policies.

Despite such progress indigenous people still represent 14 percent of the region's poor and 17 percent of the extremely poor - while forming less than 8 percent of the population.

Jorge Familiar, the bank's vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean, said governments needed to do more to ensure indigenous people had the same opportunities as others.

"If we want to achieve our goals of reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity, we need to fight discrimination and exclusion for all Latin Americans and ensure that all have the same opportunities to live a better life," he said during the report's launch earlier this week.

Poverty levels declined in countries like Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile and Ecuador but indigenous peoples still lag in access to basic services and the adoption of new technologies, the study found, based on census data in 16 countries and household surveys in nine.

To improve the situation, the authors suggest looking at indigenous issues through a different lens which takes into account indigenous people's views and culture.

Nearly half of Latin America's indigenous populations now live in cities, 36 percent of them living in insecure, unsanitary and polluted environments, the study found.

(Reporting by Astrid Zweynert, editing by Tim Pearce. Please credit the Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, which covers humanitarian news, women's rights, trafficking, property rights and climate change. Visit news.trust.org to see more stories)

Direct Link: <http://news.trust.org/item/20160218181020-065uh>

Pope In Mexico: Asks Indigenous for Forgiveness

Rick Kearns

2/19/16

Pope Francis asked indigenous people for forgiveness and for their help in dealing with climate change during his recent trip to Mexico where he also said a mass at a basilica honoring an indigenous saint and then at a mass that preceded meetings with indigenous leaders from several Latin American countries, parts of the service were translated into three indigenous languages.

The Pope began his trip with a visit to Mexican government officials but spent much of the next four days meeting with and honoring Indigenous Peoples from all of the Americas.

On the second day of the Pontiffs five day visit to Mexico he said mass at the Basilica of Guadalupe, named for the Virgin of Guadalupe who, according to church legend, appeared to the indigenous Juan Diego and where, last November, for the first time in Mexican history the mass was said in Nahuatl, the language of 1.5 million people in Mexico.

But it was during his visit to Chiapas, home to more than one million indigenous people and site of a conference that brought together many thousands of indigenous leaders from Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and elsewhere, where the Pontiff addressed indigenous people in general. (One press report asserted that close to 300,000 indigenous people were in the region to see the Pope and/or attend the conference.)

“We cannot remain deaf before one of the greatest environmental crises in history, and on that score you have much to teach us,” Pope Francis said at a mass in St. Cristobal de Las Casas in Chiapas.

“Your peoples have been misunderstood and excluded from society. Some have deemed your values, culture, and traditions inferior. Others, giddy with power, have forced you from your lands and contaminated them,” the Pontiff continued.

“How good that it makes us examine our consciences and learn to say forgive, forgive, brothers. Today’s world, deprived by a throwaway culture, needs you. In a certain way, it is a call to awaken, but in many ways they have tried to anesthetize our souls to not feel the pain of injustice.”

The mass in St. Cristobal de las Casas also featured the reading of biblical passages translated into Ch’ol, the psalms into Tsotsil, the homily into Tzeltal and the singing of the Our Father prayer in Txotsil.

While the saying of mass in those indigenous languages by a pope in Mexico is an historic first, this was not the first time Pope Francis had officiated mass that was translated into an indigenous language nor was it the first time the Pontiff had asked forgiveness of indigenous people for the brutality inflicted on them by European invaders in the Americas.

In his 2015 tour of Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay the Pope said mass in Quito, Ecuador where many of the readings were translated into Quechua. During a mass in Bolivia the Pope first publicly asked for forgiveness

“We humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses committed by this same church but also for the crimes committed against the original people during the so-called conquest of America,” the Pope said in a mass in Bolivia.

After the mass in Chiapas, the Pope met with indigenous leaders from the region as well as some of their families. Immediately prior to the Pope’s visit to Chiapas, a conference of indigenous leaders from 15 Latin American countries came together to discuss land rights issues and the implications of the Papal Encyclical entitled “Laudato Si” in Spanish.

The Pope wrapped up his visit to Mexico in the border town of Juarez where he first visited a prison and then said mass in a large stadium. He also said a prayer near the US/Mexico border in an area filled with small crosses erected to honor the thousands of migrants who have lost their lives in the crossing. Migrant rights advocates have noted that many of those migrants are indigenous from Mexico and Central America.

“We cannot deny the humanitarian crisis which in recent years has meant the migration of thousands of people, whether by train or highway or on foot, crossing hundreds of kilometers through mountains, deserts and inhospitable zones,” he said in Juarez. “The human tragedy that is forced migration is a global phenomenon today.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/19/pope-mexico-asks-indigenous-forgiveness-163487>

APTN Announces 24-Hour U.S. TV Network -- All Nations Network

ICTMN Staff

2/19/16

The Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN), the Canadian-based cable channel dedicated exclusively to First Nations and indigenous-based content, has announced they are launching a U.S. based All Nations Network (ANN.)

According to the APTN news release, "The U.S. ANN will be the first network to bring both native and non-native audiences in the U.S. a 24-hour network providing native news, sports, scripted, lifestyle, feature-length movies and children's programming written, produced, and directed by Native Americans, among others."

ANN has already received endorsements in the midst of a lack of diversity controversy in Hollywood. The endorsements are from such individuals as actor and producer Robert Redford, Oscar nominated actor Graham Greene (*Dances With Wolves*), Robbie Robertson (*The Band*) and acclaimed director Jim Jarmusch.

"There is demand for a national Native network across the country," said award-winning filmmaker Jim Jarmusch in the release. "A vibrant new generation, a golden era of Native film-makers and artists will be born and have a dedicated channel through which to express their voices. There is a market that is waiting. There is an audience that is waiting. The time is now."

"We think the time is right for Native Americans to have their own channel and are happy to see the positive discussions Castalia has had with major US Pay TV operators," says Jean La Rose, APTN's Chief Executive Officer.

"Our experience in Canada has been one of creating and providing opportunities for our producers, for our storytellers, to tell our stories, in our words, to our Peoples and to the world. Native American producers are poised and eager to have the same opportunities and we believe that we can work together to provide a unique window into the lives -- past, present and future -- of this community."

Currently, the headquarters is slotted to be in New Mexico under the guidance of Native American filmmaker Chris Eyre (*Smoke Signals* and NBC's *"Friday Night Lights"*).

Eyre, a Sundance Film Festival and Director's Guild of America award-winner, will be working closely with APTN Execs for the All Nations Network launch.

"In 2016, it is essential that progressive portrayals of Native Americans be available to all cable and satellite subscribers through the efforts of ANN's mission to provide a 24/7 channel for true Native American content of all kind. It's not an abstract and this channel is long overdue," said Eyre in the release.

"For more than 15 years, APTN's award-winning programming in Canada has reached a staggering 92% of Canadian households and commercial establishments, and has strong traction with both First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples and non-Aboriginal communities. Over 80% of Aboriginal men and women in Canada find content on APTN a source of pride. ANN will provide an opportunity to bring reflective, contemporary, compelling, and original content to consumers of all cultures in the U.S.," said the release.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/19/aptn-announces-24-hour-us-tv-network-all-nations-network-163490>

Rodger McDaniel: You can't give away what you don't own

By Rodger McDaniel

Feb 20, 2016

Some Wyoming legislators want Congress to give federal lands to the states (so-called public lands transfer bills already have failed in the current budget session).

The proposal has one major flaw. It's the inconvenient fact that the federal government doesn't hold clear title to the property.

Of 2.25 billion acres of land in our country, federal stakes amount to 28 percent, or 640 million acres. Some 30 million acres lie within Wyoming's borders. That's 48 percent of the Cowboy State, making it almost as much Washington's country as God's country.

The word "Wyoming" is a Delaware Indian word meaning "alternating valleys and mountains." Those alternating valleys and mountains belong to several Native American tribes known as Plains Indians.

The historic owners included the Arapaho, Shoshone, Arikara, Bannock, Blackfeet, Cheyenne, Crow, Gros Ventre, Kiowa, Nez Perce, Sheep Eater, Sioux and Ute tribes.

This land is not your land. This land is not my land. This land is their land. If ownership is relinquished to anyone, it should be returned to Native Americans, not to the states, the Bundys or other so-called Sagebrush rebels.

Native American claims have better legal standing than claims made in political circles by ranchers, farmers, miners or loggers. Those groups have no better claim to this land

than does someone who got your car from the thief that stole it from you. Receiving stolen property is a crime in most states.

All of Wyoming and most of the land within the United States was stolen. Our forefathers were not above employing brutally immoral means to take it from Native American tribes. And this is not ancient history. The theft was completed during a generation in which my great-grandfather lived.

As white people moved West, the U.S. government made a decision. White lives mattered. Red lives didn't.

The settlers and the government who stole the land they wanted were people of European heritage whose holy book taught how a homeland is central to one's faith.

They slaughtered vast herds of bison upon which Native American lifestyles and culture depended. The U.S. military used systematic violence and genocidal strategies.

They negotiated treaties and violated them without regret. In the process, our government did what it could to eradicate Native Americans and, in the end, settled on herding them onto reservations, land that was inadequate to sustain the vitality of any culture.

Taking the property of a land-based culture birthed the inevitable.

The result some 150 or more years later is the hopelessness U.S. Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., encounters on reservation after reservation.

As chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, Mr. Barrasso held hearings on Native American youth suicide. He said, "Native youth suicide isn't a new issue," and asked Robert McSwain, Indian Health Service director, "When are we going to see results?"

Mr. McSwain said reservation children suffer from chronic poverty and a sense of hopelessness.

“Our children believe they are destined to suffer the same history and injustices our ancestors suffered,” Mr. McSwain said.

White people destroyed their culture. Instead of blaming victims, the heirs of the destroyers should right the wrong.

In her book “Ceremony,” Leslie Silko says, “The (Native) people had been taught to despise themselves because they were left with barren land and dry rivers. But they were wrong. It was white people who had nothing, who were suffering as thieves.”

There’s an adverse spiritual impact knowing that even the land on which we preach the Gospel is stolen. Wealth and sustainable cultures arise from the land. Restore their land and you’ll restore their culture.

Some will reject this because, they will assert, they had nothing to do with what happened in the last half of the 1800s.

But we are beneficiaries of America’s two greatest sins, slavery and the destruction of the Native Americans. This is their land. They have the inherent skills and motivation to make certain these assets provide the means of resurrecting their great peoples, America’s First Nations.

The Christian nation some say we are must atone. The land stolen from Native Americans, which is now under federal ownership, should be returned to the land’s rightful owners.

Rodger McDaniel is a Cheyenne writer. Email: rmc81448@gmail.com.

Direct Link: http://www.wyomingnews.com/opinion/rodger-mcdaniel-you-can-t-give-away-what-you-don/article_7b3524ac-d7a1-11e5-ba21-c30854ef33e2.html

Confused about the word 'Eskimo'? It helps to look deeper.

Charles Wohlforth
February 20, 2016



Dalee Sambo Dorough is an associate professor of political science at UAA. *Marc Lester / Alaska Dispatch News*

As the word 'Eskimo' gets ready to depart from writing and polite conversation, I've regretted having to say goodbye, so I called an old friend who hasn't liked the word for a long time.

While I was growing up in Turnagain, oblivious to race except for my parents' lessons to treat everyone the same, Dalee Sambo Dorough was growing up Inupiaq in Inlet View, enduring racist taunts at her elementary school, where she was the only Alaska Native.

We went on to the same high school (as did our daughters, who also became friends), but I left for college while Sambo Dorough was centrally involved in the biggest Native issues of the day, starting even before she graduated.

She was at the founding of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference with Eben Hopson in 1977, and, while running the ICC's Anchorage office during the 1980s, raised money for the [Thomas Berger report](#) that gathered rural reactions to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. That historic report influenced changes in the way Alaska's Native corporations are structured. Along the way, Sambo Dorough also got a doctorate in law. Today, Sambo Dorough is on unpaid leave from the University of Alaska Anchorage to travel the world, also unpaid, as chair and now as expert member of [the United National Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues](#).

I asked if the word Eskimo is racist. She paused before saying, "I cringe at its use, but not to the extent that I would lash out and say, 'Don't use that term.'" She also doesn't like the word Bush as a reference to rural Alaska, which has largely disappeared without much note.

Sambo Dorough learned about first peoples choosing their own names for themselves as a young woman, when she first got involved in international indigenous issues. In Canada and Greenland, they were getting rid of names given by outsiders, including Eskimo, and returning to their own traditional names, such as Inuit.

“We see this happening across the globe, of indigenous peoples, indigenous communities, asserting themselves by use of their vocabulary, their names according to themselves, and I think it is ... an expression of the right of self-determination,” she said. “One of the elements of self-determination is self-identification.”

That ends the discussion for me: Everyone deserves to choose his or her own name. But the language we share belongs to all of us, and losing words can make it difficult to communicate. Practically, we end up more separated when we lose words.

In this case, it’s a problem because the meaning of Eskimo doesn’t exactly match Inuit.

In Inupiaq, the word Inuit means people, so it works in northern Alaska as well as it does in Canada. But Yup’ik doesn’t have the word Inuit, and those Southwest Alaska people are Eskimos, too, sharing cultural traits with the Inupiat and with other peoples along the coast to Prince William Sound. Calling them Inuit would be giving them an outsider’s name.

Some [Yup’ik speakers who don’t like the word Eskimo ask simply to be called Yup’ik](#). But [a professor of Yup’ik at the University of Alaska Fairbanks told ADN reporter Alex DeMarban](#) that losing the word Eskimo is like losing the word pickle. You could still talk about dill and sweet varieties, but not pickles in general.

Losing words complicates speech. I recently encountered this problem while writing about the history of European sailors who came to Alaska to map its coast and report back what they found. That’s a long way of saying they explored, but my editor (not at ADN) ruled out using the word ‘explore’ because, like the word ‘discover,’ it suggests that Alaska was empty, when in fact it had already been discovered and explored by its first people.

I think Vitus Bering did explore and discover Alaska from the point of view of Europeans, in the same way tourists explore and discover Alaska today from their own point of view (although I appreciate that they don’t claim to own it, as he did). But I understand the editor’s concern that we can’t sit down and explain that concept to every potentially offended reader.

The most severe linguistic crisis surrounds words for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people. A couple of years ago, before speaking on a radio show on gender issues, I asked a lesbian community leader to define the new initials being added to LGBT— some people are now using LGBTQIA — and couldn’t get a clear explanation even from her. With some transgender people asking to be called the plural “they” rather than “he” or “she,” the English major in me begins to feel desperate.

I doubt I’m the only well-meaning non-LGBTQIA person (if that’s what I am) who simply steers clear of certain topics to avoid using the wrong word and offending someone.

We’ll muddle through. Society is changing rapidly and our brains haven’t all received all the new mental software patches. By the time we do, maybe advocates for groups will also realize there is a point of diminishing returns for renaming.

But with Eskimo it's a bit more complicated. The issue has lasted for decades. In Canada, Inuit replaced Eskimo almost 40 years ago. More than 20 years ago, [Sambo Dorough called for getting rid of the word in the Anchorage Daily News](#). But about 10 years ago I was scolded by a North Slope elder for using Inuit. He said, "That's Canadian. In Alaska we're Eskimo."

I asked Sambo Donough about Alaska Native groups that haven't decided themselves what they should be called.

"This suggests something really important, Coolie," she said, using my long-discarded nickname from high school. "To me, this suggests the fact that indigenous communities in Alaska have not had the political and intellectual space to have that conversation. They haven't arrived at a consensus. ... I think what we're seeing, especially amongst the younger generation, is individuals who want to answer that question, and are thinking about their identity as individuals and the collectivity that they are attached to, and in certain areas it is becoming clearer and has crystallized about who we are as Native people."

Cheers to that effort. We need a new synonym for Eskimo. In the meantime, please don't take offense.

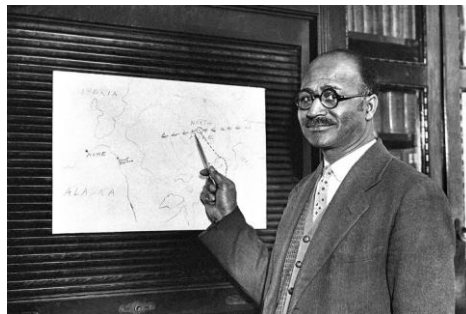
Charles Wohlforth's column appears three times weekly. Reach him at atcwohlforth@alaskadispatch.com.

Direct Link: <http://www.adn.com/article/20160220/confused-about-word-eskimo-it-helps-look-deeper>

Little-known African-American among Peary's North Pole explorers

Matthew Henson was born 150 years ago

February 21, 2016 12:12 AM



In this May 14, 1926, photo, Matthew Henson, in New York, points to a map of the North Pole. He was part of the expedition of Robert Peary to the Pole.

By Mark Roth / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

When the morning of April 7, 1909 dawned, Matthew Henson checked the temperature outside.

It was 29 below zero.

Later that day, Henson and the man he worked for, Robert Peary, would raise an American flag to claim they were the first to reach the North Pole.

Peary, 52, was a naval officer born in Cresson, Pa., and he had been trying to reach the pole for 23 years. Henson, a 42-year-old African American, had accompanied Peary on the last four of his five attempts to reach 90 degrees North latitude. And since Henson usually broke the trail ahead of Peary, many believe that he was actually the first man to reach the fabled spot on the treacherous ice pack over the Arctic Ocean.

While experts today believe that Peary, Henson and the four Inuit tribesmen who were with them probably did not reach the pole, they acknowledge the crew got within five miles of their goal.

“It’s kind of an enigmatic place,” said Michael Robinson, a history professor at the University of Hartford and an expert on the polar expeditions. “Unlike most locations on the Earth, the North Pole is over an ocean on a shifting pack of ice. There is no way you can plant a flag and assume it will still be there even 15 minutes later.”

But doubts about the Peary crew’s achievement didn’t surface for many decades. For the rest of his life, Peary was hailed as the discoverer of the North Pole. Henson, in the meantime, faded into obscurity, and only received recognition for his role in the expedition starting in the 1930s, when he was in his 70s.

Henson was born 150 years ago in Nanjemoy, Md., about 40 miles southwest of Washington D.C. His parents were free black sharecroppers who died when he was still a boy. At age 12, he shipped out of Baltimore as a cabin boy. The captain of his ship taught him the Bible, mathematics and some of the classics, giving Henson his first real education.

Henson had returned from his voyages and was working in a clothing store in Washington, D.C., when, as a 21-year-old, he met Peary, who had stopped in to buy a sun hat for a government expedition to Nicaragua. Henson offered his services as a valet, and they remained together for most of the next two decades.

As the years went on, Henson became far more than a valet to Peary, even though the walrus-mustached commander continued to look on him as a subaltern. In the 1890s and early 1900s, Henson became Peary's crucial link to the Inuit, known then as Eskimos, learning their language and mastering the art of hunting for walrus and seal, building sleds and driving the teams of dogs that pulled the sleds over the ice pack.

He also was aware of his significance as the only African American who was part of the polar expeditions.

In his 1912 memoir, "A Negro Explorer at the North Pole," Henson recalled his feelings at the moment Peary planted the American flag at what they thought was the pole.

As the flag "snapped and crackled with the wind, I felt a savage joy and exultation," he wrote. "Another world's accomplishment was done and finished, and as in the past, from the beginning of history, wherever the world's work was done by a white man, he had been accompanied by a colored man. From the building of the pyramids and the journey to the Cross, to the discovery of the new world and the discovery of the North Pole, the Negro had been the faithful and constant companion of the Caucasian, and I felt all that it was possible for me to feel, that it was I, a lowly member of my race, who had been chosen by fate to represent it, at this, almost the last of the world's great work."

Mr. Robinson, the Hartford professor, said Henson's very presence with Peary, along with four Inuits, could have been a sign of Peary's prejudice.

As the expedition made its way north across Greenland and out onto the ice pack, Robinson said, "there is some evidence to suggest that Peary actually turned back the white members of his crew who were proficient in navigation and could have helped him determine where he was, and he did that because he didn't want anyone else to claim they were first at the pole, and for racial reasons he didn't view Henson or his Inuit party as a threat" to his reputation.

Other experts have a somewhat different view. Genevieve LeMoine, a curator at the Peary MacMillan Arctic Museum & Arctic Studies Center at Bowdoin College in Maine, said that when Peary sent the white crew members back, it also meant he had "no one else to do

celestial navigation with him and that meant there was no one who could back up his claim.”

Henson and the Inuit, on the other hand, were vital companions because Peary had been greatly weakened by his previous expeditions. “Peary was quite debilitated,” Mr. Robinson said, “and had lost 8 of his 10 toes to frostbite and was mostly riding on the sled rather than driving the dogs.”

Henson got most of his belated recognition after World War II, when the biography “Dark Companion” was published in 1947. He had worked in New York for the U.S. Customs House after his return from the polar expedition, and never went back to the frozen North.

He and Peary did leave a legacy there, though. Both of them had relationships with Inuit women during their expeditions, and Peary had two sons with the Inuit woman known as Aleqasina, while Henson had one son with his second Inuit wife, Akatingwah.

Peary was married when he entered his relationship with Aleqasina, and she was married to an Inuit man as well. The arrangement was not a huge departure from some of the existing customs of the Inuit, who would sometimes create four-way marriages for economic and social benefits. “Some have suggested that the economic benefits of the Peary relationship would have been approved of by Aleqasina and her husband,” Ms. LeMoine said.

While it may be hard for people today to sense the excitement that surrounded the expeditions to both the North and South poles, Mr. Robinson said the journeys were not only the moonshots of their day, but they came at a time when many Americans worried that their growing prosperity had made them too soft.

“You had a lot of people complaining that we were so cut off from our pioneering spirit that we needed to rediscover our roots. This was the age of Jack London and the Boy Scouts getting started, and this is also when Teddy Roosevelt said we should seek out what is hard not what is easy.”

In his memoir, Henson gave vivid accounts of some of the challenges he faced.

“I have been walrus-hunting, and taxidermizing,” he wrote at one point. “That is, I have skinned a pair of walrus so that they can be stuffed and mounted. This job has been very carefully, and I think successfully, done and the skins have been towed ashore ... Two boatloads of bones have been rowed over to Dog Island for dog food.”

Recalling an earlier European expedition toward the pole in the ship *America*, Henson noted that after the crew landed, “the *America* went adrift, and has never been seen since. It is not difficult to imagine her still drifting in the lonely Arctic Ocean, with not a soul aboard (a modern phantom ship in a sea of eternal ice). A more likely idea is that she has been crushed by the ice, and sunk, and the skeleton of her hulk strewn along the bottom of the sea, full many a fathom deep.”

He also nearly lost his life when he was quite near to the pole, saved at the last minute by one of the Inuit. Two days before the flag was planted, he recalled, “I was standing and pushing at the upstanders of my sledge, when the block of ice I was using as a support slipped from underneath my feet, and before I knew it the sledge was out of my grasp, and I was floundering in the water.

“I did the best I could. I tore my hood from off my head and struggled frantically. My hands were gloved and I could not take hold of the ice, but before I could give the “Grand Hailing Sigh of Distress,” faithful old Ootah had grabbed me by the nape of the neck, the same as he would have grabbed a dog, and with one hand he pulled me out of the water, and with the other hurried the team across. He had saved my life, but I did not tell him so, for such occurrences are taken as part of the day’s work.”

While Henson has finally been recognized for his heroic work, the Inuit who went on the expeditions still tend to be underappreciated, Ms. LeMoine said. Part of the reason is that the search to find the North Pole never made much sense to the hardy tribe members who lived in Greenland.

“There is no hunting out there [on the ice cap], so why would you waste your time going out there? They did it because Peary spent years working with them, gaining their trust, and when he said he would pay them a certain amount he lived up to his word. And that’s how he got them out on the sea ice, even though there was no point to it from their perspective.”

Direct Link: <http://www.post-gazette.com/news/nation/2016/02/21/Little-known-African-American-Matthew-Henson-among-Peary-s-North-Pole-explorers/stories/201602180209>

Radicalism Between States and Tribes

Duane Champagne

2/21/16

Do indigenous nations want to reorganize nation states? In general, the answer to this question is no. Then what is the relation between tribes and nation states? There are some well-known academic positions about the relations between nation states and tribes. Decolonization and neomarxist points of view envision Indigenous Peoples are relegated to economic and political marginalization. In this view, Indigenous Peoples are reduced to victims of history and they have few alternatives but to join the other victims of the market system, and national and international political policy to secure equality or healthy livelihoods and opportunities.

A problem with the marginalization theories is that they do not ask Indigenous Peoples what they want and how they want government and economy. For Western nations, the world is a war of all against all. Political, economic, and cultural relations are competitive and result in winners and losers. Under such a political understanding, Indigenous Peoples are losers to more powerful political forces. Despite the legal and political domination of nation states, Indigenous Peoples do not see themselves as losers, but rather temporarily oppressed by self-centered, monocultural, nation states.

Most nation states do not respect or value indigenous cultures and therefore try to transform Indigenous Peoples into citizens, and assimilate them by devaluing their cultures and ways of life. In the holistic worldviews of most indigenous nations, there are many nations, many cultures, and many political systems, all of which should be respected by other nations. Indigenous Peoples want to respect the governments and cultures of nation states, but at the same time maintain their own unique languages and cultures.

While nation states want to transform the governments, economies, and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, do Indigenous Peoples want to transform nation states? Indigenous Peoples do not want to reorganize nation states, but want nation states to treat Indigenous Peoples with respect and mutual support. This means that nation states need to gain consent from Indigenous Peoples for nation state programs that foster cultural, economic, and political change.

Indigenous Peoples want to participate and engage with nation states as citizens and indigenous nations. At the same time, Indigenous Peoples hold that they have the right to their own economies, governments, cultures, and strategies for change. In this way, Indigenous Peoples do not want nation states to exercise unilateral political, legal, and cultural decision-making powers over Indigenous Peoples.

Decisions at the legal, national, regional, local, and cultural levels need consent and engaged decision-making, where Indigenous Peoples have veto power. This is the long-standing political process of consensus formation, which is alien to the delegated powers of most contemporary nation states. Veto power over government decisions of indigenous issues would be considered a special right by most nation states, while it is an inherent right for Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples want consensual, reciprocal, and respectful relations with nation states, but that involves an inherent right to veto decisions by nation states.

So do Indigenous Peoples want to change nation states? No, but they do want nation states to conform to indigenous expectations and understandings of autonomy and respect for the actions and rights of indigenous nations. Both indigenous nations and nation states have differing worldviews of expected and acceptable cultural and political actions. Indigenous Peoples don't want to change nation states, but do expect nation state respect for inherent rights of political autonomy and cultural diversity.

While nation states and Indigenous Peoples want to cooperate, they both hold positions that are not agreeable to each other. Indigenous Peoples see nation state rules as oppressive, while nation states see indigenous positions as extra-constitutional and often politically and culturally radical. Both sides are protecting deep commitments to differing ways to manage government and cultural relations. While both sides have strong commitments to their own traditions, each side wants the other to change by conforming to the political rules and expectations of the other.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/21/radicalism-between-states-and-tribes-163366>

How Will Native Americans in the Southwest Adapt to Serious Impacts of Climate Change?

A drying landscape and changing water regime are already affecting tribal lands



The ground cracks as a waterhole on Navajo lands in Arizona dries up. (Michael Weber/imageBroker/Corbis)

By [Sarah Zielinski](#)

SMITHSONIAN.COM

FEBRUARY 22, 2016 10:00AM

Around the world, indigenous peoples are among the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. That is true, too, in the United States. Coastal native villages in Alaska have already been [inundated with water](#) due to melting permafrost and erosion, and the Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw Indians of Louisiana recently announced plans to [resettle on higher ground](#) after losing 98 percent of their lands since 1950 to rising sea levels.

But leaving traditional lands is not an option for many Native Americans. In some ways, they have the same migration opportunities as anyone, but these peoples often have a profound relationship with the land and leaving it can mean losing traditional native culture, [Derek Kauneckis](#), a political scientist at Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs, said this past weekend at the 2016 meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) in Washington, D.C. He and three other experts presented their research in a symposium on “[Climate, Water and the American Indian Farmer](#).”

Scientists are trying to identify how these tribes will be affected by climate change, and how they can not only adapt to that change but even thrive in the face of it, Kauneckis says.

For those tribes living in the American Southwest, that means dealing with warmer temperatures, longer [droughts](#) and [decreasing water supplies](#), notes [Maureen McCarthy](#), executive director of the Academy for the Environment at the University of Nevada, Reno.



This gif shows how much the snowpack in the Sierra Nevada diminished between March 27, 2010 and March 29, 2015. (NASA Earth Observatory)

The southwest region is [shifting into a drier pattern](#) as wet weather systems have become rarer, scientists recently reported in *Geophysical Research Letters*. And researchers reported last year that the western United States [could face a megadrought](#) by the end of the century. But an even bigger problem is that as temperatures rise, more precipitation is falling as rain instead of snow. Normally winter precipitation builds snowpack in the Rockies that feeds streams in warmer months when rain is scarce. When the snowpack is smaller than average, there can be less water available. New patterns in storms and extreme weather can result in catastrophic flooding—water that is not useful. And rising temperatures also means that more of that water is lost to evaporation, leaving even less for people to use.

Already these conditions are affecting Native American tribes in different ways, says [Karletta Chief](#), a hydrologist at the University of Arizona and a member of the Navajo nation. A loss of soil moisture on Navajo lands in northeastern Arizona, for instance, [caused sand dunes to inundate homes](#), she notes. And the [Hualapai](#) of Arizona had to sell much of their livestock during the most recent drought.



A Navajo woman feeds her herd in Monument Valley, Arizona. (Marc Dozier/Corbis)

While these problems face everyone in the Southwest, Native American communities have unique vulnerabilities. One of these is a complex system of land ownership, notes [Loretta Singletary](#), an economist at the University of Nevada, Reno. On these “[checkerboard lands](#)”—where patches of land may be owned by tribes, individual tribal members or non-Native Americans—it can be difficult to know who has authority to act and make decisions about land and water.

In addition, many Native American lands have been divvied up into parcels that now, generations after they were established, have dozens of heirs that all have interest in the land. Decision-making becomes inefficient, Singletary says, and it can be impossible to manage the land’s resources sustainably.

But other laws dating to the 1800s, those dealing with water, may be an advantage for Native Americans in the Southwest. “Water means something totally different west of the Mississippi,” McCarthy says. “Water is a valuable commodity.”

Unlike in the eastern United States, water laws in the region are based on two basic principles: “First in line, first in right,” McCarthy quips, and “use it or lose it.” The older a claim is, the more water that user gets, she explains. And those who don’t make use of all of their rights can lose them.

A 1908 Supreme Court decision, known as the [Winters Doctrine](#), established that Native Americans have some of the oldest water rights in the United States. However, most of the communities have yet to have those rights legally quantified, something that usually requires litigation, Singletary notes. Plus, water laws usually reserve water only for agriculture. Other uses, such as providing drinking water or keeping streams and lakes full enough for fish, aren't considered. This is a "major challenge" for these communities, she says.

Managing water is incredibly important in these communities. "To us, water is sacred," Chief says. But many Native Americans lack access to clean water, including some 40 percent of Navajo. Chief herself didn't live in a place where water came out of a faucet until she went to college. People may travel up to 40 miles away to fill up huge drums that will last a few weeks. Others may have wells, but these are often drawing from shallow aquifers that are the first to dry up in a drought.

Native Americans, with their long history, can be a rich source of traditional knowledge on past environmental conditions and how to survive in difficult times, Chief notes. In California, for instance, the U.S. Forest Service is working with tribal members to reinstitute [traditional burning practices](#) for better fire and land management in the face of drought. Scientists are now starting to work with native communities to draw on that knowledge and develop adaptation strategies for the future, such as diversifying crops and the local economy, conserving water and providing better education for the younger generation.

The [Native Waters on Arid Lands](#) project, for instance, is bringing together researchers, native communities and government officials to address water issues for sustainable agriculture. [Another project](#) is looking more closely at issues faced by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in

Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/how-will-native-americans-southwest-adapt-serious-impacts-climate-change-180958172/#diP14q9kuxzCcMgx.99>

In Oklahoma, killings of Native Americans raise questions

Mental illness among Indian residents often confronted by police not equipped to deal with problem

February 22, 2016 5:00AM ET

by **Juliana Keeping**



Melissa Goodblanket with a portrait of her family at her home in Clinton, Oklahoma, Feb. 13, 2016, with Ma-hi-vist in the rear of the photo.

Noami Barron burst out of her boyfriend Mah-hi-vist Goodblanket's home and fell to her knees.

"They shot Bird!"

She started to throw up.

Mah-hi-vist, 18, whose name in English translates to Red Bird, has oppositional defiant disorder, a little-understood condition that he controlled with the help of therapy and medication. He'd been in the midst of a mental episode when his father, Wilbur Goodblanket, called 911, worried that his boy was going to hurt himself – but no one else.

The family wanted help from medical personnel and law enforcement calming down Mah-hi-vist. But it did not work out that way. Instead, lawmen shot and killed Red Bird. The young man's tragic fate highlights a series of deadly Oklahoma incidents in which mentally ill Native Americans encountered law enforcement officers who, campaigners and relatives say, are not trained properly in how to deal with them.

That night Wilbur and Melissa Goodblanket, Mah-hi-vist's mom, couldn't believe what they heard.

"Is my son OK? Is he alive?" thought Melissa.

She jumped out of the red Dodge pickup truck where she was keeping warm with her husband and younger son and the family's German shepherd. She wanted to take a coat to Barron, who was wearing just black stretch pants and a pink pullover on that freezing December night, Dec. 21, 2013, in Custer County, Oklahoma.

Lawmen order Melissa back into the pickup.

From inside the truck, parked in front of the home's picture window twinkling with white Christmas lights, family members saw officers moving around inside the well-lit living room. They couldn't see Bird.

Someone started wrapping the front yard in yellow tape. An officer tapped on the hood of the truck and motioned for the family to come out. "Sorry. Your son didn't make it," he said.

The Custer County district attorney later ruled the shooting a justifiable homicide.

The Goodblankets call it something else. "Murder," Melissa said. "They murdered our son."



At the funeral for Ma-hi-vist Goodblanket, his grandmother pays her last respects.

At a time law enforcement agencies are re-examining training procedures and policies and outfitting officers with body cameras to address questionable police shooting and in-custody deaths in urban areas like Baltimore and Ferguson, Missouri, the Goodblankets believe their son's death is a glaring example of inadequate training in rural Oklahoma law enforcement agencies that routinely encounter the mentally ill.

In their search for answers, the Goodblankets discovered their ordeal was not unique to Custer County, whose namesake, Gen. George Armstrong Custer, carried out the slaughter of a peaceful band of Cheyenne and Arapaho tribal members only 60 miles west of the Goodblanket home. Nor is it unique to Oklahoma, home to 39 federally recognized tribes.

Benjamin Whiteshield, 34, was in the midst of a delusional episode and convinced he was being followed when his grandmother and mother drove him to the Clinton Police Department on June 27, 2012. He had a condition that caused seizures, and he sometimes had a paranoid or delusional episode before one occurred, Sara Whiteshield, his sister, said. When he got out of the family's vehicle, he had a wrench in his hand. A Clinton police officer shot him in the mouth. He later died.

Similar scenarios have played out elsewhere in western Oklahoma.

Ninety miles south of Clinton, in Lawton, Christina Tahhahwah, 37, was staying with her grandparents on Nov. 13, 2014, when her relatives called 911. She was bipolar and was in the middle of a mental episode, throwing objects around the house. Her family members wanted help getting her back on her medication and to a hospital for a medical assessment.

Police instead arrested her for trespassing and took her to jail, according to an account in The Lawton Constitution. On Nov. 14, she was found unresponsive in her cell. Family members attended a Lawton City Council meeting at which, they said, witnesses reported officers repeatedly used a stun gun on her after she refused to stop singing in jail. She died at a hospital on Nov. 17.



A mural at the Goodblanket home shows the meeting of Melissa and Wilbur Goodblanket, with their sons, Ma-hi-vist and Ahk-ta-na-hi on horseback. Garrett Fisbeck for Al Jazeera America

But it is with Ma-hi-vist and the story of his life that the Goodblankets are most concerned.

The Cheyenne name Mah-hi-vist means Red Bird. Red Bird was the name of Wilbur's great-great grandfather, a Cheyenne warrior killed at 18 while trying to stave off U.S. troops who attacked a sleeping band of Indians at the Battle of the Washita in 1868. The Washita Battlefield National Historic Site is an hour's drive west of the Goodblanket home.

As a child, Mah-hi-vist always wanted to wear his buckskin shirt and play with his bow and arrow. He insisted he grow his hair long, and his dad braided it. Mah-hi-vist loved horses and took a huge interest in anything about Native Americans on TV, watching the movie "Dances With Wolves" again and again, mesmerized.

When anger issues surfaced in grade school, seemingly out of nowhere, the Goodblankets said they were convinced Red Bird carried that anger into this life from the past, from his warrior namesake who had witnessed the slaughter of children, women and men.

But they also sought modern answers for the mysterious battles that seemed to rage in their little boy's mind. Answers were hard to come by in rural Oklahoma.

While Oklahoma has the second-highest rate of adults with serious mental illness in the nation, it spends so little per capita on mental health that in 2015, only six states spent less per person.

In grade school, the family fought for an assessment to help Mah-hi-vist succeed in school and learned their son had oppositional defiant disorder. The "Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders," published by the American Psychiatric Association, states those with the condition can be angry, irritable, argumentative and defiant and can exhibit symptoms alone or along with another mental health issue, like

substance abuse or depression. It's not known what causes the condition, though contributing factors may be environmental and inherited.

His parents transferred him to a private Christian school, where he excelled under one-on-one attention and a caring learning environment. But tuition was steep.

At public middle school in Clinton, Mah-hi-vist grew into a huge kid, often mistaken for someone much older. The principal called his mother in to talk for about her concerns with the boy's braided hair, his love of the color red. Melissa, a massage therapist, would apologetically explain to her clients in Clinton that she had to take care of business at the school. Then she would explain to the principal that her son, Mah-hi-vist, wears his hair long because he is Native. He is not in a gang. His name means Red Bird. Red is his favorite color.

With his mental condition unchecked, trouble found him.

He got into a fistfight with his best friend. Afterward, he didn't remember any of the details but felt extraordinarily embarrassed. The huge boy — always the tallest in his grade — cried and wanted his parents to hold him. He didn't understand what had happened.

"Mom, he said. "There's something wrong."



A painting by Ma-hi-vist Goodblanket at his home in Clinton. Garrett Fisbeck for Al Jazeera America

At 14, he spent three months in an in-patient program 100 miles away in Norman. His stay resulted in glowing reviews from Mah-hi-vist's counselors and fresh understanding about what triggers episodes linked to his condition, like last-minute changes to a plan. Life normalized, though it didn't come without struggle. Kicked out of a private high school for fighting, he finished at an alternative high school closer to home.

He wrote his parents, educators and counselors a poem of thanks for graduation day, May 25, 2012:

With hurdles to jump
Challenges to face
Poor choices to conquer
I have Overcome

I am taking the walk
I made it through the DARKNESS
This is my chance
A 2012 graduate a year in advance
Ahead of my class
No regrets of life experiences endured
I step forward leaving the past in the past
Knowing
I walk to receive the document earned
Excited for the future
Another page in my story turned
Not without gratitude to all of you
Friends, relatives, mom and dad, educators and counselors too ...
A-ho, Wa-Do Thanks My hat is off to you.

In the fall of 2013, he fell in love with Barron.

Mah-hi-vist returned home for winter break after a semester of college at Haskell Indians University in Lawrence, Kansas. He planned to transfer to college in Weatherford, closer to home.

Then on Dec. 21, 2013, on the longest night of the year and a freezing one, Mah-hi-vist had another episode, his first in years and the worst his family ever saw.

Sitting at a kitchen table at the family's one-story brick home outside Clinton, the Goodblankets recounted that night.

As Melissa and Wilbur prepared to attend church, Mah-hi-vist, Barron and Ahk-ta-na-hi, the Goodblankets' younger son, headed to Clinton in the family's pickup for snacks. The plan, set the day before, had been for the three of them to hang out at home that night.

For Mah-hi-vist, last minute changes to an expected path of action triggered mental episodes. When Barron called Melissa and asked to be dropped off at her grandmother's house in Weatherford, it wasn't what he expected. He misunderstood his girlfriend's intentions. He thought it meant she was leaving him, and he became intensely focused on that and upset.

As Mah-hi-vist, Barron and Ahk-ta-na-hi pulled up to the family home, Mah-hi-vist got out of the truck. “Please don’t take her,” he told his mother. Barron and Ahk-ta-na-hi followed him inside.

“Noami, please don’t go,” Mah-hi-vist pleaded. She did not know about his mental illness. “Please don’t go. Please don’t go,” he said again and again.



Wilburt Goodblanket, Ma-hi-vist Goodblanket’s father.

Mah-hi-vist brushed by his dad, who saw a small bottle of alcohol in his son’s hand, and walked outside.

Melissa ran to the garage, got into her small sport utility vehicle and drove a few hundred feet down the driveway to meet him. His knuckle was bleeding, as though he had rammed his fist against a tree. She persuaded him to get into the car, and they drove back to the garage.

Melissa got out of the car and walked into the kitchen.

“He wants to talk to you,” she told her husband.

Wilbur went to talk to Mah-hi-vist in the garage. His son was hysterical, crying and shaking and saying he didn’t want to live anymore. Wilbur tried to calm him down and urged him to go inside and take care of his hand, eventually persuading him inside and to the sink.

Melissa knew her son was walking a line, a stumble away from a full-blown episode. She saw it in his eyes, which returned a blank stare. During past episodes, her son hadn’t listened to reason, as if he couldn’t hear or see anyone, not really. In the kitchen, though, he calmed down. He was himself again.

“Ahk-ta-na-hi, I’m sorry for scaring you,” he said to his brother, giving him a huge bear hug. “I love you.”

“I love you,” he told his father, embracing him too.

As Mah-hi-vist hugged his mother and told her how much he loved her, Wilbur left to drive a little more than 4 miles to nearby Clinton for cigarettes.

Mah-hi-vist asked for Naomi, who was in his bedroom. She walked into the kitchen. She didn’t run to him, and he possibly saw that as a sign of rejection. He became agitated, thrashing his arms and limbs — all 6 foot 8 of him — and walking inside and outside. He knocked over the Christmas tree and kicked a glass window out of a storm door leading to the garage. He shattered his big bedroom window.

Wilbur got a panicked call from his younger son.

“Dad, get home,” Ahk-ta-na-hi said. “I think he hurt himself this time.”

“What happened?” Wilbur thought. “He hurt himself this time?” He called Melissa and, crying, she begged him to come home. He drove as fast as he could on icy roads and dialed 911, worried his son was going to hurt himself.

Wilbur attempted to summarize what was happening and give directions to a dispatcher, but he put the phone by his side to keep his son from breaking another window. “No, no, stop!” he shouted to Mah-hi-vist. Naomi remained in the home, as did Melissa’s mom, who has dementia and lives in the family’s basement, but she remained downstairs as events unfolded.

The pulsing lights of an ambulance broke the darkness. Melissa felt relieved that paramedics could evaluate her son. Behind the ambulance, a Custer County deputy’s squad car arrived.

Wilbur introduced himself to the sheriff’s deputy. “I’m the dad,” he said. “He went around the house.”

The deputy didn’t ask what was going on. Mah-hi-vist was outside too and peeked his head out from the opposite side of the house. He walked into the garage and into the house, closing the door behind him.

“He’s right here,” Wilbur called out to the deputy, gesturing toward the door in the open garage.

Melissa walked out the front door at almost the same time her son went inside. Mah-hi-vist closed the front door and locked it behind her. The deputy continued to investigate with his flashlight.

Ahk-ta-na-hi, who had been hiding in a front yard treehouse, crept down the steps. The deputy whipped around and pointed a weapon at the boy. “No, that’s our son!” Melissa cried out.

“Get down! Get down!” the deputy yelled, his weapon drawn and pointed.

As Ahk-ta-na-hi struggled to walk down treehouse steps with his arms up, the family’s German shepherd, Sissy, darted around a corner, barking and barreling toward the deputy. Wilbur intercepted it by the collar.

“You better put that dog away or I’ll shoot it,” the deputy told the family.

As Wilbur gathered Sissy and put her in the truck, a second deputy walked up. “Get back,” he yelled at them. “Get back!”

“Why is he screaming? Why is he yelling?” Melissa wondered, confused.

Wilbur asked him if the family members could get into the truck and out of the cold. “Yeah,” the deputy said. “That’d be all right.”



The Goodblankets have left splattered blood on the wall of their home in the belief that it is part of a crime scene. They believe it is from a deputy who they say cut his hand on a broken window on the way into their home.

Wilbur, Melissa and Ahk-ta-na-hi gathered inside the truck. Wilbur pulled it up in front of the picture window so they could see what was going on.

The deputies walked together to the broken window in Mah-hi-vist’s bedroom. The Goodblankets watched as one deputy yanked a curtain down. They entered the house but quickly went back outside.

As they approached the truck and walked toward an ambulance, Wilbur noticed one deputy was holding his hand. The second had his arm around the other's shoulder.

As they passed the driver's side of the pickup, one of the deputies yelled out to an EMT, "He about cut his fingers off!"

The Goodblankets watched as three Oklahoma Highway Patrol cars parked on the road. Wilbur counted five lawmen walking toward the house. Their weapons were drawn. "Don't shoot my son!" Wilbur yelled.

"All he needs is an assessment," Melissa cried out.

Four of the lawmen entered the home. In the truck, the blasting heater muffled sound from outside.

It was nearly 8 p.m. That's when Barron burst out of the garage, screaming, "They shot Bird!"



Wilbur and Melissa Goodblanket with a photo of Ma-hi-vist Goodblanket, taken when he ran in the Sand Creek Massacre Spiritual Healing Run.

Barron's account, according to Melissa and Wilbur, was that Ma-hi-vist was crying and asking for his parents when law officers entered the house. She was sitting on his lap. She got up and walked toward the home's side door that led to the garage, and Ma-hi-vist stood up and walked toward the officers. That's when shots rang out.

Barron could not be reached for comment.

Mah-hi-vist's body was taken out of the home on a stretcher and in a body bag at 6:30 a.m. Melissa asked to perform a ceremony and was told she could not see or touch her son.

As sunset neared and in freezing temperatures, the group laid hands on Red Bird's body bag and prayed together for his journey to the other side, for his release.

Reached by phone in February, Custer County Sheriff George Peoples declined to discuss the details surrounding the events that night. So did Angela Marsee, the current Custer County district attorney, who was an assistant district attorney at the time.

Peoples has maintained in multiple media reports that Mah-hi-vist was throwing knives at deputies and that a struggle ensued, resulting in a deputy's shooting his finger, which had to be amputated. An autopsy report showed Mah-hi-vist had a 0.1 percent blood alcohol level the night he died. Peoples told a reporter for the Clinton Daily News that a dispatcher received calls from the Goodblanket home that Mah-hi-vist was "drunk, armed with a knife, assaulting occupants in the house, kicking in the doors and breaking out the windows."

"Deputy [Chance] Avery utilized a nonlethal Taser ... It was ineffective," Peoples told the newspaper. "While being attacked, Deputy Avery tried to hold off the 6-foot-8-inch Goodblanket with one hand while drawing and firing his weapon with the other, striking the suspect and also shooting his index finger on his left hand. At the exact same time, Deputy [Dillon] Mach fired numerous rounds, striking the suspect."

The Goodblankets maintain that Avery sliced his finger on a window at the home and question not only the account of a struggle but also whether Avery was in the home at all. The Goodblankets said they did not tell a dispatcher that their son was drunk or armed but have been unable to get copies of 911 calls they made from Custer County.

The Custer County district attorney in 2014 ruled the death a justifiable homicide.



Melissa Goodblanket



Damage from a shot fired during the incident remains on the Goodblankets' kitchen counter. Melissa said she can't and won't stop looking for justice for her son.

Avery and Mach later received accolades from the law enforcement community for the bravery they displayed. The Oklahoma-based Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, to which Wilbur and his sons belong, condemned the police's actions in the killings of Mah-hi-vist and Benjamin Whiteshield, the man in the midst of a paranoid episode who sought help from Clinton police in 2012, only to be shot and killed by an officer. David Crabtree, the Clinton police chief, did not return a call seeking comment.

Full-time deputies, like all other Oklahoma peace officers, are required to complete hundreds of hours of academy training before they begin their duties, with an additional 24 hours of training per year to maintain credentials. A tiny fraction of that time is dedicated to mental health issues.

Peoples says his six deputies fill shifts 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There's not much time to sit in class. There's no money to staff crisis intervention officers, who undergo extensive training in dealing with mentally ill subjects. Departments in large cities like Oklahoma City and Tulsa have this kind of team, a luxury, but not in Custer County or elsewhere in rural Oklahoma.

"Welcome to the real world," Peoples said. "I don't have money for the deputies to go chase down who's cutting fences, driving in crops, dumping trash, stealing cattle, domestics ... We do all of that. We barely have enough people, and a lot of times don't have enough people to respond to those needs."

On a recent day, the Custer County jail, capacity 128, is at 114. Peoples calls it "a mental health holding facility ... My jail is full of mentally ill. It's unbelievable."

Ray McNair, the executive director of the Oklahoma Sheriffs Association, acknowledges there is room for improvement when it comes to training rural deputies on best practices for mental health calls.

"What would be fantastic across the state of Oklahoma is if every department has a particular set of deputies or police officers that receive specific training for those particular incidents and they were the ones that were called to those particular cases," he said.

Dennis Smith, the Custer County district attorney who ruled Mah-hi-vist's death a justifiable homicide, defended his decision as fair and based on the facts but felt better training would help prevent heartbreaking scenarios from occurring in the first place.

"It all comes out in the end," he said. "People make choices, and unfortunately, when those choices are made, sometimes they have terrible consequences. I do think mental health has been neglected in the state. It has been for years. Every deadly force case involving law enforcement stands on its own merits. Could [more training] have helped? Certainly it could have helped."

The curriculum for law officers' continuing education in Oklahoma changes slightly year to year, depending on law enforcement trends, McNair said. Now there is a focus on diversity training and de-escalation tactics, he said, after controversial police killings in Ferguson and elsewhere.

Peoples said de-escalation is nothing new. "De-escalation, it's something we practice every day," he said. "We rarely have to go inside a house. It's something we do all the time. That's regular basic police work there."

The Goodblankets disagree. Custer County deputies needlessly escalated the events that led to their son's death, the couple said, from the moment each deputy stepped foot on the property.

Melissa said the thought that sharing Mah-hi-vist's story could bring about positive changes in mental health training for rural agencies or help in any way to prevent needless killings of mentally ill people is what keeps going and what keeps her family together in the face of at times overwhelming grief.

"I grew up around the church, but I have a deeper understanding of spirituality than that," she said. "As a child, my mother always told me, 'You always tell the truth. The truth may hurt, but always tell the truth.' And that's all that we want. We want the truth to be told. Because we're supposed to be able to call on people to assist us. Not to call on people to come and murder our children. And it's happening all over the country. It has to stop. The taking of lives has to stop."

Direct Link: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2016/2/22/oklahoma-killings-native-americans.html>

Bernie Asked at Town Hall If He Will Protect Native Lands

Jaqueline Keeler

2/22/16

During MSNBC's [Town Hall](#) last Thursday featuring Democratic candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders, a tall Paiute man, William Anderson addressed Sanders from the audience: "There are those who oppose the American people's ownership of public lands, and would see those lands sold to private interest. As president, how would you ensure that our public lands remain in public hands, and preserve our heritage and lives by stopping corporations from destroying Mother Earth?"

Anderson, a former Moapa Paiute tribal chairman, told ICTMN that his question had been carefully vetted by the NBC producers, but he did for a moment consider asking whatever he wanted. "This is live TV and they can't edit what I say. I'll say what I have to say regarding Gold Butte."

Sanders replied by calling Native American treatment by the U.S. government a "disgrace" and reminding the audience of his "Keep It In the Ground" act he [co-sponsored](#) to "not extract fossil fuels in the future from any public lands" and promising to "do everything I can" to "work with the Native American community in preserving their heritage, and their way of life."

Sanders has also [formed](#) a Native American policy committee and promised to convene a climate change summit in the first 100 days of his presidency that will include Native representation. He is also the co-sponsor of the 2013 Violence Against Women Act which expanded Native American jurisdiction over non-Indians in cases involving domestic violence on Native lands for the first time in over four decades. Sanders has promised to further increase tribal jurisdiction in the next authorization of the bill.

Mah'ha-gah-doo (Gold Butte) in Clark County, Nevada, the traditional homeland of the southern Paiute people, encompasses some 360,000 acres of mountains and Joshua tree

and Mojave yucca forests. The highest peaks contain ponderosa pine and white fir and at lower elevations, forests of pinyon and juniper. Ancient petroglyphs and archaeological sites abound.

Gold Butte located east of Lake Mead on the Arizona border has been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) by the Bureau of Land Management to protect critical habitat for desert tortoise and 77 plant and animal species. However, there is very little enforcement of protections offered by this designation.

A well-known opponent of protection of Gold Butte is Cliven Bundy, the infamous “welfare rancher” who led an armed standoff against the BLM in 2014. He had grazed his cattle on these public lands but refuses to pay copy million in grazing fees in protest of federal land management practices claiming measures to protect the environment and the cultural heritage of tribes is illegal under the constitution.

Anderson told ICTMN that the first part of his question: “*There are those who oppose the American people's ownership of public lands,*” refers obliquely to Cliven Bundy. Bundy and his family have publicly participated in attacks on Indigenous archaeological sites. In 2015, his son Ryan Bundy was arrested for taking part in an ATV ride through a culturally-sensitive site in Utah and, locally, the Bundy family have been suspected of shooting up petroglyphs in Gold Butte. This week, the FBI reported a latrine was dug near a Paiute archaeological site during an armed, 41-day occupation led by his sons, Ammon and Ryan at the Malheur Wildlife Refuge in Oregon.

“Finally, justice worked the way it’s supposed to be working,” Anderson said in response to Cliven Bundy’s recent arrest in Portland, Oregon. “People can’t treat tribes with no respect at all and be allowed to mess with our artifacts. We were glad to hear the law was applied to protect the Paiute tribe up north. The Southern Paiute offer them our support. Our tribes are right there to stand with you.”

According to an [NPR report](#) in January, “Gold Butte, roughly the size of Los Angeles County, is basically lawless right now. Trash is dumped here and there. Some of the BLM’s route markers are torn down. Illegal off-road tracks from ATVs lead into the desert. Some pioneer gravesites were even dug up, bones scattered everywhere.”

Scientists under contract with the BLM were shot at last summer and quickly left. Local community members blame Cliven Bundy and the atmosphere of intimidation he has created.

Anderson was glad to get a chance to speak on the national stage about issues important to him and his people.

“Petroglyphs won’t get shot up and removal of graves, baskets, pottery. Our history our culture our heritage being disrespected.”

Anderson plans to travel to Washington, D.C. next month to press for the co-management of Gold Butte with his tribe and other Paiute tribes. Failing that, he would like to see Gold Butte be given national monument status.

He went into the Town Hall on Thursday not yet knowing which candidate, Hillary or Bernie, that he was going to vote for. However, he was put off by the Clinton campaign brushing off his suggestion that they visit tribal communities. “They had a different way to do their campaigning, doing phone calls, etc. They said we have our own way and never called me back.”

The Sanders campaign, Anderson says, understood how important that it is to have the Native American vote.

At the Town Hall, however, he wasn’t entirely happy with Sander’s response, “[He] didn’t answer questions the way I thought he would, but he still gave an answer as to how he can help Native American tribes. For him to talk like that really needs to be followed up on.”

The New York Times [reported](#) that Sanders “has 12 offices across the state, more than any other political candidate, with outposts in remote areas like Winnemucca, home to the Northern Paiute Tribe, and Fernley, outside Reno.”

Myron Dewey, of DigitalSmokeSignals.com, and member of the Walker River Paiute Tribe, spent Thursday taking Julia Jones, an actress who stars in the Twilight Saga films, to visit some of the 27 Native American tribes in Nevada. Jones, speaking for Bernie Sanders, is of African American and Choctaw and Chickasaw descent.

Jones spoke to students about continuing their education and following their dreams. She is herself a graduate of Columbia University and her father a civil rights attorney known for his work in the Black community in Boston.

The Bernie Sanders campaign sponsored a lunch at the Walker River Paiute tribe and a dinner at Pyramid Lake.

“All the tribes honored her and the volunteers for their work,” Dewey told ICTMN. “Beautiful to hear elders say a blessing for Bernie and his family.”

Dewey had been on the fence at first like Anderson. Clinton supporters had been calling him but when he asked about Clinton’s past policies to protect tribal sovereignty he says he got, “No word. No one knew anything about tribes.”

Then he attended a Bernie Sanders [event](#) held at the University of Nevada, Reno.

“What I witnessed there, the treatment and listening to tribal people I saw. [Bernie] not only had them on stage but he actually answered their questions.”

It was that that won Dewey’s vote. A candidate who was, “Answering our questions and picking up where Obama left off. Not recreating the wheel but adding to it.”

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/22/bernie-asked-town-hall-if-he-will-protect-native-lands-163497>

Matchbox Twenty's Rob Thomas apologizes for 'racist' joke in Australia

Thomas said he wasn't aware that his joke would be considered offensive given the cultural sensitivities surrounding indigenous Australians.



Thomas was accused of being racist when he made a joke on stage about jetlag, saying he drank "until I think I'm Australian, and I keep drinking until I think I'm a black Australian."

By: The Associated Press, Published on Mon Feb 22 2016

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA—Matchbox Twenty frontman Rob Thomas has apologized after being accused of making a racist joke during a solo concert in Australia.

Thomas apologized on Facebook following the Saturday night show in Melbourne, where he made a joke about dealing with jetlag by drinking.

"And then I drink until I think I'm Australian, and I keep drinking until I think I'm a black Australian," he told the crowd.

The joke was viewed by some Australians as derogatory toward the country's Aboriginal population. Aborigines are the poorest ethnic group in Australia, and many remote indigenous communities have high rates of substance abuse.

Thomas said he was unaware of the cultural sensitivities surrounding indigenous Australians and it wasn't until after the show that he was told he had said something considered racist.

"Please understand that although it is no excuse, I was completely unaware that in Australia there is a polarizing social issue happening right now involving indigenous people and alcohol," Thomas wrote in a Facebook post. "Everyone who knows me is aware that for the past 20 years I have been a fervent supporter of civil rights, so I am incredibly embarrassed by my ignorance."

Thomas is touring Australia to promote his new solo album, *The Great Unknown*. He has seven more shows to play, including a Wednesday performance in front of Sydney's famed Opera House.

Direct Link: <http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2016/02/22/matchbox-twentys-rob-thomas-apologizes-for-racist-joke-in-australia.html>

Native American Paintings Could Be Removed From Key Capitol Spot

February 23, 2016 11:41 AM



ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — State officials may remove several paintings that some say depict Native Americans unfairly from a prominent spot in the Capitol.

That's the recommendation from a panel of lawmakers and experts examining the Capitol's massive artwork collection. The four paintings in question include a few images showing Native Americans in stereotypical clothing and another with a bare-chested woman.

Those paintings would be removed from the governor's reception room and placed elsewhere in the Capitol. It's a small but controversial piece of the ongoing renovation at the state Capitol. A committee of state officials overseeing the project discussed the possible removal Tuesday.

Gov. Mark Dayton says he supports their removal.

A final decision won't come until the fall. The Capitol is expected to re-open in early 2017.

Direct Link: <http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2016/02/23/native-american-paintings-could-be-removed-from-key-capitol-spot/>

Business Meets Culture at Nike's Native American Network

[Chelsey Luger](#)

2/23/16

At Nike, you might not expect to find a strong presence of Native American culture and community. But in fact, the Native American Network (NAN) has managed to instill just that. At Nike World Headquarters in Beaverton, Oregon, NAN is working everyday to make sure that the Native American voice is one that is valued and well represented.

NAN, one of eight diversity employee networks at Nike, has been effective at creating a presence of Native American culture at Nike. Its mission and purpose is to serve as a platform of support and professional development for Native American employees within the company, while also offering programming and creating a space for discussion, education, and community building surrounding the environment, Native American youth and families.

So, how does the NAN do it? Some of its programming is internal, like professional development and social events for the Native employees and Native-allied employees on campus. Other efforts reach far beyond headquarters by bringing in folks in from all over Native country to participate in events that align with the network's mission.



Through its Native American Network — one of eight diversity employee networks at the company — Nike has been effective at creating a presence of Native American culture in its campus. Photo courtesy Shyla Spicer.

In the past year, for example, it embarked on an initiative to celebrate Native American heritage through the lens of wellness. During Native American Heritage month, the Nike campus was surrounded by evidence of an Native American presence: the chefs in the kitchen coordinated with NAN to serve healthy, ancestral foods; the Native comic book designer Jeffrey Veregge was commissioned to design a superhero to envision wellness

and movement; he then hosted an art talk with the Nike Design community to share contemporary Native design from his point of view.

NAN also hosted Native American fitness enthusiasts from around Native country to present information about Native wellness and to train Nike employees using Native fitness methods at the Bo Jackson Fitness Center at Nike World Headquarters. This included Thosh Collins and Chelsey Luger on behalf of the Well For Culture initiative; Lovina Louie with “Pow Wow Sweat;” and Acosia Red Elk with BUTI yoga.

The Native American Network is comprised of Nike employees from various areas of the company who volunteer their time toward these efforts.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/23/business-meets-culture-nikes-native-american-network-163504>

Rooney Mara Regrets Native American Role In ‘Pan’: “I Hate” Contributing To Hollywood Whitewashing

By Andrew Shuster | 5:38 pm, February 22nd, 2016



Rooney Mara reveals in a new interview her regret over playing the Native American character Tiger Lily in last year’s *Pan*, and being responsible for contributing to Hollywood whitewashing. The actress admits, “I really hate” being “on that side of the conversation.”

The entertainment industry has been getting a lot of criticism lately over the lack of racial diversity in TV and movies, and of course, over zero black actors being nominated at the 2016 Oscars. Additionally, even when there are roles tailored for people of color, white actors often end up getting the parts. A recent example of this is *Exodus: Gods and Kings*, which featured all white actors, including Christian Bale, playing ancient Egyptians. Emma Stone also caught flak for playing a character who’s supposed to be part Hawaiian and part Chinese in last year’s *Aloha*.

In an interview with *The Telegraph*, Mara commented on her direct involvement with the whitewashing controversy. “[It’s a] tricky thing to deal with,” the actress says. “There were two different periods; right after I was initially cast, and the reaction to that, and then the reaction again when the film came out.” Mara is referring to a petition, signed by 96,000 people, that urged Warner Bros. to cast a Native American actress as Tiger Lily.

“I really hate, hate, hate that I am on that side of the whitewashing conversation,” Rooney continues. “I really do. I don’t ever want to be on that side of it again. I can understand why people were upset and frustrated.” Looking back on the casting decisions for *Pan*, which also starred Hugh Jackman, Amanda Seyfried, Cara Delevigne and Garrett Hedlund, Mara admits, “I think there should have been some diversity somewhere.”

Direct Link: <http://www.gossipcop.com/rooney-mara-whitewashing-native-american-pan-role-regrets-character-hollywood-diversity/>

Tomaquag Museum grant to help improve career opportunities for Native Americans

By G. Wayne Miller
Journal Staff Writer

Posted Feb. 22, 2016 at 10:54 AM
Updated Feb 22, 2016 at 11:03 PM

EXETER, R.I. — The campaign to eliminate economic disparities affecting Rhode Island’s native American communities has received a boost with the awarding of a grant to the Tomaquag Museum’s Indigenous Empowerment Initiative (IEI), which uses museum resources and other means to boost employment — directly and indirectly.

“The network we are forging will bring together people from many different walks of life — from the arts, culture and museums, to business, education and government,” said museum executive director Lorén Spears, who has been seeking financial support for a number of indigenous efforts. “It takes a team to fulfill the dream of equity to erase poverty.”

The grant, for \$35,714, comes from Third Sector New England, the Boston-based societal-improvement organization that specializes in helping nonprofit groups that share its vision of “a society grounded in and guided by principles of social and economic justice and mutual respect,” according to Third Sector’s mission statement.

"With Tomaquag as the hub, we will educate tribal members throughout Rhode Island by empowering their cultural and ecological knowledge and weave that into the framework of contemporary careers that museums house," Spears said. Among those careers: marketing, business and finance, education, administration and museum studies.

Rhode Island's Native Americans, including indigenous people of Narragansett and Niantic descent, are at an economic disadvantage to the state's whites, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Fewer than a third of Native American households own their homes, compared with nearly two-thirds of whites, and Native American household median income is \$28,750, compared to \$62,188 for whites.

Among the features of the IEI initiative are internships "to expose Native American youth and adults to the various opportunities a museum has to offer"; paid positions; a paid fellowship; and with educational partnerships, the creation of museum studies and Native Studies degree programs.

Spears said the overall effort will also help the larger Rhode Island community.

"It is so important for the Native and Rhode Island communities," she said. "When we empower others, we empower ourselves."

Direct Link: <http://www.providencejournal.com/article/20160222/NEWS/160229828>

Native American Hall of Honor seeks nominations

Posted: Feb 22, 2016 4:40 PM Monday, February 22, 2016 6:40 PM EST Updated: Feb 22, 2016 4:40 PM MST Monday, February 22, 2016 6:40 PM EST

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) - The nomination process is open for the North Dakota Native American Hall of Honor.

The Hall is a new annual program recognizing Native Americans who have gone above and beyond in representing their tribe and culture. It's located in the North Dakota Heritage Center & State Museum in Bismarck.

The program recognizes traditional and contemporary achievements in four categories: Arts and Culture, Athletics, Leadership and Veterans. Nominations can be made of people who are living or in memory of those who have died.

The program is a partnership of the North Dakota Indian Affairs Commission, the State Historical Society of North Dakota and the State Historical Society Foundation.

The society says the vetting process will be competitive, with only two people per category accepted into the Hall each year.

Direct Link: <http://www.ktiv.com/story/31285841/native-american-hall-of-honor-seeks-nominations>

Peru oil spill pollutes Amazon rivers used by indigenous group

23 February 2016



rivers

oil has spilled into two nearby

At least 3,000 barrels of crude oil have been spilled in an Amazonian region after leaks from Peru's main oil pipeline, the state oil company said.

The oil has polluted two rivers that at least eight indigenous communities rely on for water, the government and indigenous leaders said.

Petroperu has promised a full clean-up and is also providing food and water.

The company said the first leak was triggered by a landslide but the cause of the second rupture was unclear.

The oil has poured into the Chiriaco and Morona rivers in northwestern Peru, the government's environment watchdog, OEFA, said.

The spill is affecting the Achuar community and heavy rains have hampered efforts to contain it, local indigenous leader Edwin Montenegro said.

More on Peru's Achuar

Peru's health ministry has declared a water quality emergency in five districts and OEFA officials said Petroperu could face fines of up to \$17m (£12m) if the spills were found to have affected local people's health.

In a statement, OEFA said the spills were "not isolated cases" and ordered the company to replace parts of the pipeline and improve maintenance.



has promised to clean up the oil

Petroperu president German Velasquez also denied reports the company had paid children to clean up the thick sludge.

However, Mr Velasquez said he was considering firing four company officials, one of whom may have allowed children to collect oil.

The company was evaluating the 1970s-built pipeline to prevent future spills, he said.

The leaks have stopped the transportation of up to 6,000 barrels of oil a day.

Direct Link: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-35636738>

JMU Native Americans react to bill that would establish indigenous holiday

By Avery Powell |

Posted: Wed 10:50 AM, Feb 24, 2016

HARRISONBURG, VA. (WHSV) -- Lawmakers in the General Assembly are now considering a bill that would establish an Indigenous Peoples' Day, separate from Columbus Day and it has Native Americans in the Valley talking.



According to the bill as it passed the House of Delegates, House Bill 144 would make Indigenous Peoples' Day the third Wednesday in November. This is separate from Columbus Day in October, but in the past year, some cities have even moved to abolish Columbus Day altogether. The bill also includes a recognition of "Native Americans Day" alongside Columbus Day.

Three Native American students at James Madison University feel that their history has been erased or altered and not taught correctly. The three started the Native American Student Union hoping to spread awareness of Native American culture and provide a place for Native American students to come together.

"Across all borders we need to bring more recognition to all the indigenous tribes and I think having a Native Americans day, starting it here in Virginia and spreading it across states, spreading it across North America, I think that's a really really positive step," said Jacqui Finston, who's family is from the Mi'kmaq tribe.

When asked whether they believed getting rid of Columbus Day would be erasing history all together, Mahala Gates, who's family is from the Cheroenhaka-Nottoway tribe, says she is confused as to why Christopher Columbus is honored at all.

The bill did pass the house earlier in February and moves to the Senate Committee on General Laws.

Direct Link: <http://www.whsv.com/content/news/JMU-Native-Americans-react-to-bill-that-would-establish-indigenous-holiday-369930711.html>

'Reservations Not Required': Ukiah artist brings Native American themes to gallery, museum



Local Native American painter Pete Ethan Castro is a Ukiah-born Wailaki descendant who will be the featured artist at the Corner Gallery in Ukiah throughout March. Chris Pugh—Ukiah Daily Journal

By Carole Brodsky, for The Ukiah Daily Journal

Posted: 02/23/16, 7:59 PM PST | Updated: 14 hrs ago



A self-portrait painting sits on a small easel in Castro's studio space.

Ukiah-born Wailaki descendent Pete Ethan Castro has returned home, in all ways.

The abstract painter and contemporary Native American artist's work will be featured at the Corner Gallery in March.

In April, the Mendocino County Museum will be displaying a comprehensive showing of Castro's work in its long gallery. Castro will be a participant in the museum's Education Day, when hundreds of students will hear him speak about his unique life and perspective.

The exhibition, titled "Reservations Not Required- Returning Home," is Castro's deeply personal journey depicting themes of segregation, assimilation, enculturation and redemption from the perspective of a Wailaki Indian who has lived multiple lives – as a Boy Scout, altar boy, logger, environmentalist, serviceman, husband, father and artist.

Castro was born and raised in Ukiah. His grandparents grew up in Covelo, moving to Ukiah to give their children more opportunities. “We were labeled the ‘city cousins’ by our Covelo relatives,” says Castro, whose Wailaki roots lie in the mountains north of Covelo.

“My grandparents bought back a 50-acre parcel when the federal government started allotting tribal land. We’d return to Covelo for camping, hunting and fishing. I was a card-carrying tribal member, enrolled in 1975.”

Castro’s Covelo relatives attended segregated elementary schools. “I didn’t realize Indians didn’t get to vote back then. My dad showed me the only bar they were allowed in. He told me that in Ukiah, if you went to the Victory Theater, Indians sat upstairs in ‘N-----r Heaven’ with the Black and Asian kids.”

One of Castro’s paintings, “School Daze Out of the Box” is on semi-permanent loan at Sacramento’s California Museum. It is Castro’s response to tribal segregation, ironically, housed in the museum’s California Missions section.

Castro’s great-grandmother, Mary L. Clark, was a voting clerk and tribal delegate invited to the White House in the 1930s. His grandparents never spoke about their decision to leave their native home for Ukiah, and questions swirled around Castro regarding his identity and place in the world, providing rich material for his art.

“It almost seemed like we were rich – like we were the upper crust of the family. I didn’t find out who my biological father was until I was in my ’30s.”

At Oak Manor Elementary School, Castro won an art contest. “I was paid \$5. That’s when I became a professional,” he smiles.

When he attended Pomolita, the school’s team was called the Indians. Concurrently, John Trudell was an emerging leader within the American Indian Movement. “I was traveling with my step-dad and my sister in his van, covertly doing AIM stuff. I thought they just liked to drive at night. I was at DQ University. There were protests, marches, sit-ins. We saw Sasheen Littlefeather and Marlon Brando. I was like a little white boy, but around that time I started dancing.”

A photo from the Ukiah Daily Journal shows teen Castro dancing. “We danced for the UC Powwow scene. We danced northern traditional styles, but we weren’t of that tribe. Local people weren’t allowed to speak their language or perform ceremonial dances.

“This is all happening as I’m an altar boy, because my mother had converted to Catholicism. I remember going to roundhouses. It was all on the down-low. They were invitation-only. Pomos were dancing in their long-johns wearing headdresses. They were walking in two worlds. I was a Native/Non-Native.”

“I left the church and continued dancing until high school. I stole a pair of shoes for a buddy of mine and ended up in Juvie for about 10 days.” Castro smiles and mentions that his buddy is now a local optometrist.

“I was ‘too cool for school.’ I became totally immersed in the white world, focusing on baseball and art.” He was a write-in candidate for class artist and was selected in 1979. “That was one of the highlights of high school. That and Laura Hamburg,” he winks.

Castro briefly attended community college in South Lake Tahoe. “My dream to become a forest ranger devolved into a casino carouse. I returned to Ukiah and went to the High School with the intent to ask direction from Richard Hamilton. I entered the closed campus and was spotted by Vice-Principal Hardin. I guess I was a high-level threat,” he smiles. “I was dragged into his office. I was pretty good with a forked tongue in those days. He called the police and I was charged with trespassing and verbal abuse.

“When I showed up in court, Judge Broaddus asked if I’d ever considered joining the military. My father was a paratrooper and my brother had enlisted. Dan and Carrie Hamburg said to me, ‘Are you sure about this?’ I chose to enlist.”

Castro became a heavy equipment operator in the 7th Army Engineers at Fort Polk, Louisiana. “I wanted to become a grader operator like my grandfather. I’d get the GI bill, return to school, get a house. It had worked for my family.” It worked for Castro for two years, until it didn’t.

“I’d received commendations, going steadily up the ranks. I was good at running the grader and I was doing my job. After about two years of being a decent service-member, I started receiving write-ups for insubordination, for being out of uniform.

“I’d created another persona who couldn’t follow instructions, couldn’t drive the equipment, couldn’t pass licensing. A psychological evaluation determined it would take too much money for the military to fix me.” After 26 months, Castro received an honorable general discharge.

“I returned to Covelo, working for three years as a bulldozer operator, skidding logs in the Mendocino National Forest. I didn’t think about the damage to the forest. After a close call, I got scared by dangling logs in front of me. They could have ended my \$10 an hour job,” he smiles. “Lumberjacks deserve their due. They risk their lives daily. It’s tough work. I’d had enough.”

Castro got retrained in the architectural field. He became a husband and father, moved to Sonoma County and worked in civil engineering. “Architectural drawing wasn’t art, and I still wasn’t being a Native. But I was in touch with the land. I did surveying, drafting and architecture for over 20 years.”

“I was in the Novato wetlands at an estuary slated to become the Vintage Oaks Shopping Center – something I was helping develop. I saw a big sturgeon. A man told me it was the

last sturgeon in the area. This opened my eyes. What we were willing to give up for the sake of progress?

“I became an architectural designer for a pneumatic tube company that worked in hospital systems. I stayed in Sonoma County until my kids got out of high school.”

From there, Castro became certified as a solar installer and designer. He began the long road back to his art and his heritage. “I’d met the heavy hitters in the natural building scene in Sonoma County, and ended up as a straw bale builder, which gave me freedom to work on art.

“I started building my dancing regalia, which took two years. I was getting focused. All my woes weren’t caused by my bad marriage; maybe I had something to do with this,” he says.

Castro began dancing again. “I danced around in this Coyote outfit for about seven years. I gave up the yupster lifestyle because it was going to kill me. I couldn’t be a good partner, a good father. Maybe the dance would help. It sobered me up, but it wasn’t the final answer.”

“I began teaching straw bale construction, weaving in Native-ness with natural building skills. My parents and I started learning how to weave baskets with native plant materials. I got a grant to go to Berkeley to the Iccles Language Conference, where I started learning the Wailaki language.”

Castro became the land caretaker for Starhawk – the celebrated neo-pagan political activist. After four years as a caretaker, he built a cottage for L. Frank – a Tongva-Acjachemen painter, linguist and Native American activist.

He moved in with Frank and her partner at their home in Santa Rosa’s Roseland area. “It was gangland. I built a Ti’iat canoe, learning the construction from notes taken from an anthropologist. It was the first one built in 250 years. I’m pretty proud of that canoe. It did get into the ocean. Now it’s in Santa Rosa, in gangland,” he says.

“My mom died of cancer in 2011. Then my father had a heart attack. I’m in the ER with my cousins. The doctors say he isn’t going to make it. He’s already been shocked. We do our Indian thing. Chanting. My dad starts tapping his finger to the chanting, and he snaps out of it.

“He told me later he saw his paratrooper comrades from the war, calling him, but he hears us singing in the background. He said, ‘it doesn’t make sense because they’re all white guys, and they were speaking Indian.’”

From that experience, Castro was invited to participate at the 2016 prayer breakfast at Howard Memorial Hospital.

“I end up at Carrie Hamburg’s memorial, and later reunited with Laura Hamburg, my high school sweetheart. I moved back to Ukiah.”

Castro uses acrylics and mixed media, building multiple layers of material on the canvases. He uses encaustic to adhere comic book strips and newspaper articles to his canvas, with layers of color applied.

“There’s contradicting elements in the work. I’m moving more toward the energy of abstraction. A lot of the art is raw. It’s unframed – trimmed with baseboard or wood trim, canvases stapled to painter’s drop cloth. I’m coloring outside the lines – getting away from the idea that you have to do art in a certain way. Sometimes the messiest, most instantaneous work I do shows the most genuine aspect of who I am.”

The roundhouses are all but extinct now. Castro’s coyote regalia is retired. It will be on display at the County Museum. “Is it sacrilegious to display it? I don’t think so,” he says. However, on one of the shoes, Castro is impishly applying the words: Will dance for Cash.

“My grandparents were part of the big roundup. It’s like being part of the Holocaust and never talking about it. I’m just relying on my own Injun-uity to keep moving forward,” he smiles.

Castro’s work will be at the Corner Gallery beginning March 1. A showing of his body of work will be at the Mendocino County Museum in April through the end of July.

Castro can be reached at pethancastro@gmail.com. The Corner Gallery’s website is www.cornergalleryukiah.com. Visit the Mendocino County’s Museum site at www.MendocinoMuseum.org.

Direct Link: <http://www.ukiahdailyjournal.com/article/NP/20160223/NEWS/160229944>

Judge approves \$1 billion settlement between U.S. and Native American tribes

Tribune news services

A judge has approved a nearly \$1 billion settlement between the Interior Department and Native American tribes over a decades-old claim that the government failed to adequately compensate tribes while they managed education, law enforcement and other federal services.

U.S. District Court Judge James Parker in Albuquerque gave the agreement final approval Tuesday — about five months after federal officials and tribal leaders announced they had reached a deal to settle the case for \$940 million.

The lawsuit accused the Interior Department of not paying tribes millions of dollars in federal contract costs to oversee federal Bureau of Indian Affairs programs and services dating back as far as the 1970s.

Nearly 700 tribes and tribal agencies are expected to claim compensation from the agreement, with payments ranging from \$8,000 to as much as \$58 million.

Direct Link: <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-native-american-tribes-billion-dollar-settlement-20160224-story.html>

Northern Indigenous Games will take place in April

By [Pioneer Staff Report](#) on Feb 23, 2016 at 8:34 p.m.

BEMIDJI -- The Northern Indigenous Games will take place for a week in April, from Minneapolis to Bemidji. The events feature indigenous athletes and coaches presenting traditional games played by various cultures throughout North America.

“These games are centuries old, and are continuing to be played by the indigenous people,” said event director Dan Ninham of Red Lake. “We are providing an outstanding opportunity for people of all races to actively participate in and observe these games.”

Plans also include an indigenous games instructor, official and games management certification program administered by Ninham.

Major influences to host these events are from current programs that take place throughout the world. The inaugural World Indigenous Games were in Brazil last fall, featuring indigenous athletes participating in their games. The North American Indigenous Games feature indigenous people playing contemporary games.

The events are non-competitive, and no awards will be provided. Indigenous games have historically been played to honor someone in a community, to be a part of the healing process, to train for warfare and to settle differences.

Minneapolis South High School will be the first to host the tour of Northern Indigenous Games on April 17. Other locations will be Upper Sioux Community, Granite Falls on April 18; Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Onamia School District on April 19; White Earth Nation on April 20; Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Walker Hackensack Akeley School District on April 21; Red Lake Nation, Red Lake on April 20 and Red Lake Nation, Ponemah on April 21.

During the school week, guest indigenous games instructors will present in physical education classes. An after school session is also planned in each community.

BSU will be hosting the Northern Indigenous Games from April 22 to 24. A film screening will be on April 22 at the BSU American Indian Resource Center, featuring Brown University doctoral student, filmmaker and former NJCAA National Cross Country Champion Angelo Baca (Navajo/Hopi). BSU American Indian Resource Center will also host a symposium on April 23 featuring indigenous perspectives of the indigenous games. Nine people from seven different tribes will present for 15 minutes each on the sociocultural significance of their activities on April 24 at the BSU Chet Anderson Field and other fields on campus.

Pre-registration is required to participate in the BSU hosted events, including the film screening, symposium and indigenous games. All events are free. For a schedule and registration form, visit www.honorearth.org/northerngames. For additional information contact Dan Ninham at (218) 368-6430 orcoach.danninham@gmail.com.

Direct Link: <http://www.bemidjipioneer.com/news/local/3954640-northern-indigenous-games-will-take-place-april>

LOSE THOSE FIRST NATIONS LOGOS

Everything you need to know about why those images need to go

BY **SUSAN G. COLE**, FEBRUARY 24, 2016, 2:33 PM



The Washington Redskins' logo

The issue of offensive First Nations-based sports team logos and names has resurfaced – and that's a good thing. The Equity Summit Group, representing 26 school board equity officers in Ontario, are pressing to prevent students from wearing clothing bearing pejorative names and logos.

Don Marks has been fighting this battle for years. I asked the editor of Grassroots News, Manitoba's oldest and largest indigenous newspapers, and the author of two books (They Call Me Chief: Warriors On Ice and Playing The White Man's Games, both published by

J. Gordon Shillingford) to weigh in. He gave me a primer on why co-opting indigenous symbols is so problematic.

What's the problem with First Nations-based mascots? Using a whole race of people as mascots is a big issue. It's as if they're subhuman. We don't see the Winnipeg white boys or the Jersey Jews.

Where does the word "redskin" – as in the Washington Redskins – come from? Hundreds of years ago, Indians were the richest peoples because they owned the land. But they were also considered savages. White people thought, "They don't have the capability to manage the land, so we have a right to take it."

That meant getting rid of the Indians. So there was an offer of money for every Indian killed. The scalps started piling up, but they wanted proof that the dead were Indians, so they said each scalp had to have a "red skin" attached." That's the origin of the term.



What about baseball's Atlanta Braves? That sounds like First Nations are being respected.

Why were indigenous people called braves? The generals in the U.S. Cavalry wanted their soldiers to know that the Indians were brave fighters, but the term also implied that they were stupid and ran all over the place, whereas the Cavalry was organized and had strategies. The term wasn't about honouring them.

Then there's the Braves fans' tomahawk chop.

It implies savagery and that Indians walk around with tomahawks and club people over the head. That's a terrible image for a First Nations kid to have.

The tomahawk chop [fans imitating a tomahawk chop while intoning faux First Nations chants] took over as an emblem from the mascot Chief Noc-A-Homa. Until 1986, the team had Chief Noc-A-Homa come out of after every Braves home run and do a war dance around a tepee. A tepee is a mobile home. Can you imagine a white guy in leisure suit coming out and doing a dance around a mobile home?

The Cleveland Indians' logo is way worse.

It's a cartoon, designed by someone who'd never met an Indian in his entire life.

How do you distinguish between a logo showing appreciation of Indian people and offending them?

If you have permission and cooperation of the tribe, there's no problem. Florida State University [home of the Florida State Seminoles football team] consulted the Seminole tribe on the use of their image to make sure the tribe wasn't being exploited and that it's accurate to their culture.

What about hockey's Chicago Blackhawks? Their logo's kinda dignified.

There's no Blackhawk tribe. The team was named after a World War II fighter jet, which was named after Chief Blackhawk to honour him. So that's bit of different situation.



The Chicago Blackhawks' logo

But there's a college team that uses a similar logo, isn't there?

That's the North Dakota Fighting Sioux, and there's been a huge fight there. The university wanted to drop the name because, first of all, they're not Sioux, they're Lakota [and other native variations] – Sioux is a French word. And two, there's Fighting, another caricature. But when wealthy alumnus Ralph Engelstad, who played on that hockey team, gave money to buy a new arena, he threatened to withdraw the funds if they changed the name of the team.

If Fighting's a problem, what about the Fighting Irish?

Well, that's up to the Irish.

What's your response to First Nations people who themselves embrace these names and symbols?

You have to hope that they educate themselves and catch up with their leadership. AIM [American Indian Movement], the National Congress of American Indians, the Assembly of First Nations, they're all against these logos and mascots.

Direct Link: <https://nowtoronto.com/news/think-free-blog/lose-those-first-nations-logos/>

Program to focus on Native American women in WWII

Posted: Thursday, February 25, 2016 1:00 am

By Kelsey Stewart / Times Managing Editor

Museum-goers will have the chance to learn about the least known group of World War II military veterans — Native American women.

The Sarpy County Museum, 2402 Clay St., will host a presentation on the topic Sunday at 2 p.m.

Pamela Bennett, a professor at Creighton University, will present on the topic, which ties in with the museum's overall theme this year of Native American history. The program is free and open to the public.

Museum officials were looking for an expert in the field of Native American studies and were in luck in reaching out to Bennett, said Ben Justman, executive director of the museum.

"She's a hybrid of Native American studies and history," Justman said. "It should be interesting to see and keeping with all of our programs, it should be a good one."

During Sunday's presentation, Bennett will explore the role of Native American women in World War II.

With an estimated wartime enlistment of 800, limited attention and information on their lives and military experiences are available.

Bennett will also discuss how Native American and tribal identities influenced the veterans in their military enlistment and community service.

Direct Link: http://www.omaha.com/sarpy/papillion/program-to-focus-on-native-american-women-in-wwii/article_3853e94b-8d8d-5d43-932b-7b36f94cbd1b.html

Bernie Sanders Reaches Out to Native American Voters



Published 25 February 2016 (6 hours 15 minutes ago)

Bernie Sanders delivered a speech in Tulsa, Wednesday, six days before Oklahomans head to the ballot box in the Super Tuesday primaries.

Sanders traveled to Oklahoma, a state that has voted Republican in every presidential election since Richard Nixon in 1968, with hopes of capturing votes from democrats and the state's Native American population, which is currently the second largest minority group in the state.

During the rare visit to Oklahoma, Sanders delivered a speech to over 6,000 people in which he highlighted the importance of the state's Native American population, which immediately prompted loud cheers by those in attendance.

Sanders' visit to Oklahoma coincides with the announcement Tuesday that he is hiring attorney and columnist Tara Houska as the Native American advisor to his campaign.

"I hope to elevate Native American issues at a high level," Houska said. "Too much of America is unaware of the plights our communities face, and we are tired of hearing more of the same from politicians. I look forward to continued and expanded outreach in Indian country. Our voices and our votes matter."

Leading up to Super Tuesday, the Sanders campaign has issued several statements appealing to Native American voters. During a MSNBC's Town Hall earlier this month Sanders promised he will "work with the Native American community in preserving their heritage, and their way of life" and that he will do everything he can to redress treaty violations."

Direct Link: <http://www.telesur.tv/english/news/Bernie-Sanders-Reaches-Out-to-Native-American-Voters--20160225-0010.html>

Tara Houska, Ojibwe, Named Native American Advisor to Bernie Sanders

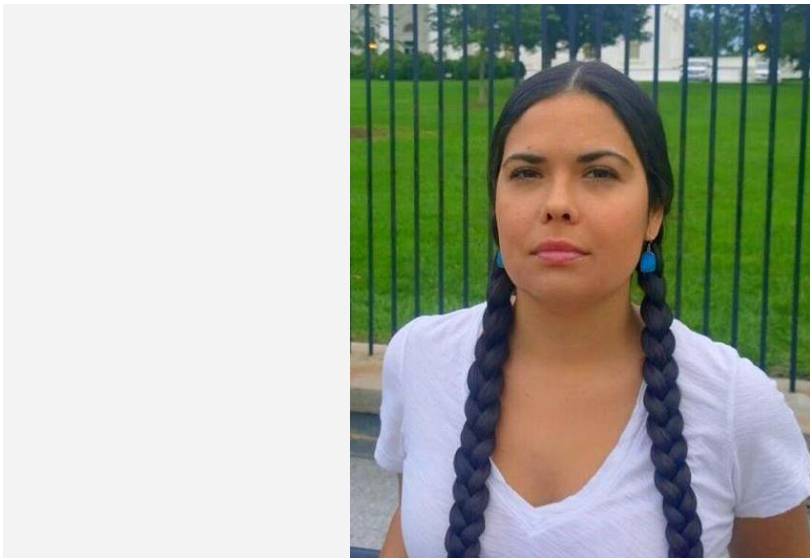
Simon Moya-Smith

2/24/16

On Tuesday, attorney and ICTMN contributing columnist Tara Houska was appointed as Native American advisor to the Bernie Sanders campaign, according to officials.

In her new role, Houska, who is Couchiching First Nation, will field press inquiries, recruit voters – particularly Native Americans – and assist with drafting Sanders’ Native American policy.

Presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders, a Democrat, has [said](#) he will “work with the Native American community in preserving their heritage, and their way of life” and that he will do “everything” he can to “[redress \[treaty violations\]](#).”



Tara Houska.

In [a Tweet on Tuesday](#), Sanders lamented that 47-percent of Native American kids live in poverty.

Houska told ICTMN she plans to thrust Native American voices and concerns to the forefront.

“I hope to elevate Native American issues at a high level,” she said. “Too much of America is unaware of the plights our communities face, and we are tired of hearing more of the same from politicians. I look forward to continued and expanded outreach in Indian country. Our voices and our votes matter.”

Houska attended the University of Minnesota with a triple major in Biology, Art History, and American Indian Studies. She holds a law degree from the University of Minnesota Law School.

She has appeared on Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," "RT America," "Native America Calling," and local Washington, D.C., news organizations speaking on Native American plight and prosperity.

Earlier this month, Houska was hired as the National Campaigns Director for Honor the Earth, an environmental justice nonprofit helmed by activist and Native American leader Winona LaDuke.

She was a law clerk for the White House Council on Environmental Quality in 2011, and has been a contributing columnist of ICTMN since January 2015.

Nicole Willis of the Umatilla Tribe was also named an advisor to the campaign earlier this year.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/02/24/tara-houska-ojibwe-named-native-american-advisor-bernie-sanders-163531>

Network's shutdown is a loss for reporting of Native Americans

Bob Collins February 25, 2016, 1:20 PM Feb 25, 2016

The decision to shutter Al Jazeera America recently was met with a general shoulder shrug. It was hard to find the channel on cable TV. It was easy to find its website, but not enough people were interested in finding it.

Yet, there's one particular avenue of its coverage that will be missed, at least by those who aren't hypnotized by the bright shiny object of political coverage and vapid reality TV. Nobody was as good at investigating stories involving Native Americans as AJA was; stories that the rest of us in the media should be ashamed to have ignored. Its 2015 series on Native American mobs in Minneapolis was as fine a piece of journalism as you're likely to find.

My old MPR pal, Katherine Lanpher, now an editor at AJA, pointed out today that this story is the last one she'll work on for the network. It too, is one that shouldn't be ignored, but will be.

It's a follow-up to the suicide of a Lakota girl on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation, a girl about which AJA reported in 2014.

Generational trauma runs deep in Lakota communities. For years after the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890, youths were forcefully assimilated and their culture destroyed in

boarding schools. Families who were forced off their property were left with no land, no resources. For many, the cycle of disenfranchisement continues.

Janis faults the United States for Santana's death. "They put these systems in place that make it so difficult for indigenous families to get help," he said. "They gave us a system that made the Lakota believe we govern ourselves when we really don't."

"Right or wrong," he said, "I blame them."

Here's what he means: When a member of the tribe wants to create a program — a safehouse and funding to go along with it, for example — it needs to go from the local level to the tribal council to the head of the council for a vote. The bureaucracy and a lack of funding mean that well-intentioned initiatives, including a youth transitional home in Kyle, are underfunded, understaffed and underutilized.

In November 2015, nearly nine months after Santana committed suicide, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, denied a five-year, \$3.6 million grant for the Oglala tribe to continue its Sweetgrass suicide prevention program, claiming the grant application was "poorly written." After deliberation with tribal members, the agency agreed to extend the project for one year with \$200,000.

Al Jazeera America talked about covering American issues "soberly" when it launched in 2013.

But an Arab-branded network struggled to stand out in the American media marketplace even though smart, insightful, investigative work *should* stand out if only by virtue of the fact there's so little of it around.

The young girls on Native American reservations would probably understand why it didn't.

Direct Link: <http://blogs.mprnews.org/newscut/2016/02/networks-shutdown-is-a-loss-for-reporting-of-native-americans/>

Montana seeks \$146K repayment from Chippewa Cree, claims tribe overbilled

By CLAIR JOHNSON cjohnson@billingsgazette.com
12 hrs ago

Associated Press

Tony Belcourt

Former Montana state Rep. Tony Belcourt, D-Box Elder, left, leaves U.S. District Court in Great Falls in April 2014.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is seeking repayment of \$146,000 it says it was overbilled for transporting pipe for use in a regional water project whose funding has been a target of fraud and questionable spending.

The Rocky Boy's Reservation's Chippewa Cree Construction Corp. has been asked to refund the amount.

The project, the Rocky Boy's/North Central Montana Regional Water System, is to bring safe drinking water to the Rocky Boy's Reservation and to 21 surrounding towns and rural water districts in seven north-central counties.

The DNRC provides state funding to the North Central Montana Regional Water Authority, which contracts with the CCCC for work on the project.

The majority of the project's funding comes from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. The tribe created the CCCC to oversee the federally funded tribal portion of the project.

The questioned invoice for shipping pipe occurred in March 2010, at a time when Bureau of Reclamation funding was being embezzled by the CCCC's then-executive director and state legislator Tony Belcourt, and other tribal and non-tribal persons who were convicted in a broad federal corruption investigation.

Belcourt and the CCCC, through a series of financial transactions and multiple contractors, used federal stimulus money to pay for water pipe shipping in a scheme that inflated the cost and provided kickbacks to himself and others.

The CCCC also billed the Authority for the same pipe shipment.

The Authority has asked the CCCC to refund the \$146,000. The tribe has responded that it doesn't believe there was an overbilling, said Larry Bonderud, the Authority's president and also the mayor of Shelby.

DNRC and Authority officials said their investigation regarding the pipe shipping costs determined they were not defrauded. Rather, the invoice resulted in an overpayment, they said.

Checks and balances

In the federal court case, prosecutors said Belcourt took bribes and kickbacks from consultants and contractors who were awarded federally funded contracts, including stimulus aid, from 2009 to 2011.

The pipe-shipping invoice was part of corruption charges against Belcourt and a co-defendant, Tammy Leischner of Laurel, who was the sister of Belcourt's business partner. Prosecutors said Leischner and her father formed T. Leischner Consulting, to which Belcourt awarded the pipe shipping contract.

Leischner created a fraudulent invoice that inflated shipping costs to steal money in a kickback scheme, prosecutors said. T. Consulting billed through another contractor and sent about \$163,000 to Belcourt, who used the money to buy a house and to start a company called MT Waterworks.

Belcourt was sentenced in 2014 to seven and a half years in prison and ordered to pay \$667,000 restitution, including \$330,000 to the tribe's water project restitution account. He pleaded guilty to theft, bribery and tax-evasion charges.

Leischner was sentenced to two years in prison and ordered to pay \$311,000 to the tribe's water project restitution account. She pleaded guilty to theft charges.

In the instance of the overbilling, DNRC Director John Tubbs said the state was not defrauded because it has more checks and balances in place. The state tracks expenses and pays bills as they're incurred and documented, he said.

The state verified that the pipe it paid for was installed, Tubbs said.

The federal funding was disbursed in advance to the tribe, which then provided a report on how it spent the money, Tubbs said.

The fraud, he said, happened on the federal side when the parties tried to claim the federal government should pay for the same pipe.

Bonderud, with the Authority, said that based on information he's seen from the state's accountants and lawyers, there was an overbilling related to shipping pipe.

"That's all we honestly believe it was. The tribe does owe this," Bonderud said.

The Authority is not dealing with the same tribal officials who were involved with the questioned invoice, Bonderud said.

"They may not understand what happened. We're going to talk to them, sit with them and the DNRC and the Authority, and demonstrate to them when and how this occurred," he said.

A meeting of state, Authority and tribal officials to review the state's documents regarding the overbilling is tentatively scheduled for later this week in Helena.

CCCC officials could not be reached for comment.

In June 2010, the state authorized reimbursement of a vendor contract that included a pipe-shipping expense of \$495,000. Upon review, the actual shipping cost was \$349,000, leading to a \$146,000 overpayment, Tubbs said.

The DNRC started reviewing its books as soon as it learned of the federal corruption investigation and worked with an attorney in the state Department of Justice's Division of Criminal Investigation and with federal investigators, he said.

The T. Consulting invoice was provided to the DNRC by federal officials during the state's internal investigation, said John Grassy, DNRC spokesman. The DNRC, he said, "did not receive the invoice as part of its authorized role in the project funding."

In a December 2015 letter to the Authority, Tubbs said the tribe sent to the Authority an invoice dated March 26, 2010, that overstated actual pipe shipping costs by \$146,000. The Authority then, in the usual course of business, sent the invoice to the DNRC for reimbursement.

"This overbilling needs to be addressed," Tubbs told the Authority.

Clean water

The pipe shipping invoice is part of an ongoing project that Congress authorized in 2002 to deliver potable water from the Tiber Reservoir to both the Rocky Boy's Reservation and to communities in Chouteau, Hill, Liberty, Pondera, Teton, Glacier and Toole counties.

Construction began in 2006. When it's finished, a treatment plant near the Tiber Dam will send water through a main, 54-mile pipeline to the reservation and to communities through a smaller pipeline system.

The project is divided into two main components, the Core and non-Core components.

The Core portion is to build a delivery system to the reservation and is funded through the Bureau of Reclamation.

The non-Core component is to provide water to an estimated 28,000 residents in off-reservation north central communities. The Havre-based Authority administers the non-Core system.

Federal money pays for 80 percent of the non-Core capitals costs, while the remaining 20 percent is split between a grant from the state of Montana and loans obtained by the

Authority. The state's share is funded from the Treasure State Endowment Program Regional Water Fund.

Although the DNRC's role is in the non-Core component, the state paid the shipping invoice for Core pipeline because some segments of the pipeline ultimately will benefit off-reservation users, Grassy said.

Congress originally estimated the cost of the entire project at \$228 million in 2002, but by 2014 that cost had ballooned to an estimated \$375 million.

Previous \$13M

In addition to the federal prosecutions, a 2013 audit by the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of Inspector General questioned the tribe's spending of almost \$13 million of some \$52.7 million it had received from the Bureau of Reclamation from 2006 to 2012 for the water project.

The Interior's audit was prompted by allegations and an investigation into possible misuse of the money.

Last July, Bureau of Reclamation officials announced they had reached an agreement with the tribe for the tribe to reimburse \$3.1 million of the \$13 million in questionable costs.

Tyler Johnson, a spokesman for Bureau of Reclamation, said tribal officials contacted the agency after the settlement seeking an alternative to immediate payment.

The agency and the tribe reached a second agreement last December in which the tribe will make payments over 10 years, beginning in October. Annual payments for the first nine years will be \$310,000, with the last payment of \$305,264 in the 10th year, Johnson said.

The tribe also will pay a small amount of interest totaling \$9,804 over the last three years of the repayment plan, he said.

The bureau, Johnson said, agreed to the 10-year repayment plan to avoid having the entire project stopped because a lump sum payment.

The settlement also established new terms and conditions in the parties' annual funding agreements, changed funding advances to monthly reimbursements and set up a separate joint bank account for withdrawing money approved for reimbursement.

The changes are working and have improved the process "to prevent a reoccurrence of something similar," Johnson said.

Direct Link: http://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/montana-seeks-k-repayment-from-chippewa-cree-claims-tribe-overbilled/article_33375dde-87ec-52a6-a93e-d1b1817e2581.html

DiCaprio and 'The Revenant:' Indigenous Wisdom and Human Survival

02/25/2016 02:18 pm ET | **Updated** 3 hours ago

Philip P. Arnold Educator, author, and speaker on Indigenous religions

As we head into the Academy Awards this weekend, we should visit Leonardo DiCaprio's acceptance speech at the Golden Globe Awards on 10 January, which concluded with his honoring Indigenous Peoples.

He said, "It is time that we recognize your history and that we protect your indigenous lands from corporate interests and people that are out there to exploit them. It is time that we heard your voice and protected this planet for future generations."

This powerful statement calls forth the combined protection of Indigenous Peoples' lands, traditions, languages and ceremonial practices--or what Indigenous Peoples around the world have come to call "de-colonization." As human survival has now become the face of climate change, it raises a profoundly important question for our age. Is Indigenous wisdom, or "religion"-- their way of being in the world--directly related to our current state that is jeopardizing the material survival of human beings? This seems to be graphically depicted in DiCaprio's recent film "The Revenant."

The central theme of the film deals with incredible loss, hinged on the only element of hope of a future through Hawk, the half Native son of fur trapper Hugh Glass. That vision is thwarted when Hawk is violently killed as Glass lay wounded and forced to watch. But this only mirrors the grief from loss and revenge that is endemic on the frontier. Native Americans and White "Settlers" are thrown into opposition, where hunting and killing becomes the impetus behind the commodification of the landscape. Grief grows exponentially. The entire economy of this part of world is based on the fur trade, which involves the mass slaughter of animals, and the cultural genocide of the people who live in balance with the natural world. The commodification of the "frontier," also justifies the military invasion of Indigenous Peoples and lands. "America" was built on a landscape of grief. Depredations of globalization so feared in the 21st century began for Indigenous Peoples in the 15th with the European "discoveries" in the so-called New World.

Going back an additional thousand years, the Haudenosaunee (called "Iroquois" by Jesuit missionaries) also tell of a period when clans and nations were embroiled in revenge killings. The people kept moving deeper and deeper into unresolved grief. Before this destructive violence extended further into the natural world, a Peacemaker arrived to deliver a message called the Great Law of Peace. This instruction would restore balance

through a protocol of Condolence, followed by a protocol of Thanksgiving, which effectively united Five Nations into the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. This event occurred at Onondaga Lake (near Syracuse, NY) in the homeland of the Onondaga Nation. Today, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy continues this ancient protocol of Peace when they convene at Onondaga.

American is in deep grief--a grief that has permeated the landscape. How do we console the land? A dream sequence in the Revenant takes place in the ruins of a church, where Glass and the ghost of Hawk encounter one another--we notice a bell swinging silently. There is no consoling message coming from the Church--it stands in ruin. As a professor of indigenous/colonial religions, this scene references the Doctrine of Christian Discovery, which is based in a series of 15th century Papal Bulls (letters from the Pope) that justified the conquest, seizure, and exploitation of non-Christian lands by Christian explorers. It justified the trans-Atlantic slave trade and fueled the Age of Discovery. Extractive economic activity took hold throughout the Americas, first for gold, silver, coal, oil, and the enslavement of people. Later, extending to the commodified 'gifts' of Indigenous Peoples, like, beaver pelts, corn, tobacco, potatoes, tomatoes, peanut butter, sugar, etc.

Today, the Doctrine of Discovery remains a fundamental feature of U.S. property law. In 1823--the very date in which The Revenant is set--US Supreme Court Justice John Marshall, ruled in Johnson v. M'Intosh, that Indigenous title to land is dissolved when Christian discoverers enter Indigenous territories. First year law students cover this in their introductory property law classes. As recently as 2005, in the landmark case, Oneida v. Sherrill, Justice Ginsburg cited the Doctrine of Discovery to emphasize that no remedy exists for the theft of Indigenous Peoples' lands under federal law.

The ancient Indigenous knowledge of living in healthy relationships with the natural world is vitally needed in the world today. The grief of a continuously colonizing worldview that is wholly dependent on an extractive economy, stands in the way of immigrant-settler people ever hearing this urgent message. The Revenant reminds us of the violent foundational past that set us on a course of destruction. Besides the obvious regret of missed opportunities, is there time to change course--time to heal?

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/philip-p-arnold/dicaprio-and-the-revenant-indigenous-wisdom-and-human-survival_b_9300566.html